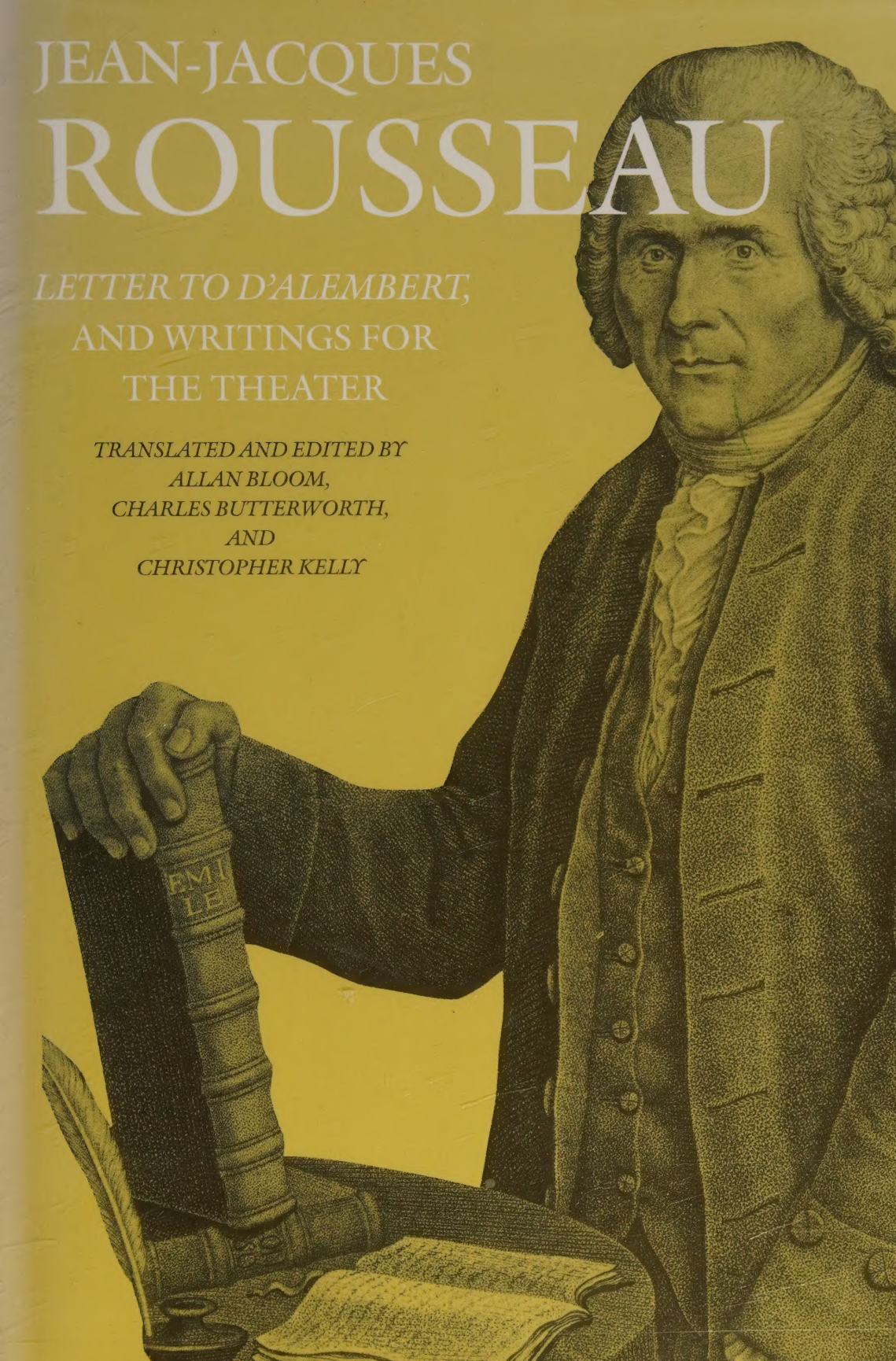
JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU

LETTER TO D'ALEMBERT, AND WRITINGS FOR THE THEATER

TRANSLATED AND EDITED BY
ALLAN BLOOM,
CHARLES BUTTERWORTH,
AND
CHRISTOPHER KELLY



The Collected Writings of
ROUSSEAU

Volume 10

In 1758, Jean Le Rond d'Alembert proposed the public establishment of a theater in Geneva—and Jean-Jacques Rousseau vigorously objected. Their exchange, collected in volume ten of this acclaimed series, offers a classic debate over the political importance of the arts. As these two leading figures of the Enlightenment argue about censorship, popular versus high culture, and the proper role of women in society, their dispute signals a declaration of war that divided the Enlightenment into opposing factions. These two thinkers confront the issues surrounding public support for the arts through d'Alembert's original proposal, Rousseau's attack, and the first English translation of d'Alembert's response as well as correspondence relating to the exchange.

The volume also contains Rousseau's own writings for the theater, including plays and libretti for operas, most of which have never been translated into English. Among them, *Le Devin du village* was the most popular French opera of the eighteenth century, while his late work *Pygmalion* is a profound meditation on the relation between an artist and his creation. This volume offers English readers a unique opportunity to appreciate Rousseau's writings for the theater as well as his attack on the theater as a public institution.

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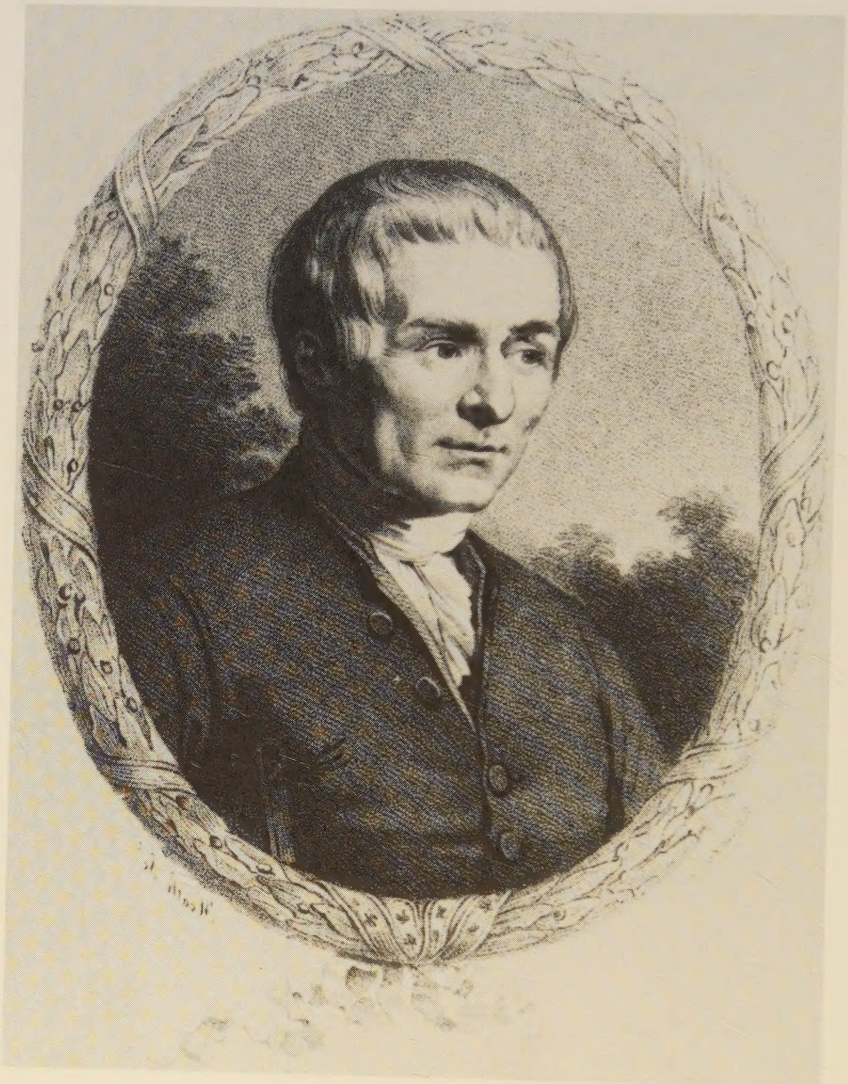
LETTER TO D'ALEMBERT

and WRITINGS FOR THE THEATER



JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU

LETTER TO D'ALEMBERT and WRITINGS FOR THE THEATER

THE COLLECTED WRITINGS OF ROUSSEAU
Vol. 10

EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY
ALLAN BLOOM, CHARLES BUTTERWORTH, AND
CHRISTOPHER KELLY

ROGER D. MASTERS AND CHRISTOPHER KELLY
SERIES EDITORS

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Preface

Although Jean-Jacques Rousseau is a significant figure in the Western tradition, there is no standard edition of his major writings available in English. Moreover, unlike those of other thinkers of comparable stature, many of Rousseau's important works have never been translated or have become unavailable. The present edition of the *Collected Writings of Rousseau* is intended to meet this need.

Our goal is that this series shall be a standard reference for scholarship, accessible to all those wishing to read broadly in the corpus of Rousseau's work. To this end, the translations seek to combine care and faithfulness to the original French text with readability in English. Although, as every translator knows, there are often passages where it is impossible to meet this criterion, readers of a thinker and writer of Rousseau's stature deserve texts that have not been deformed by the interpretive bias of the translators or editors.

Wherever possible, existing translations of high quality have been used, although in some cases the editors have felt that minor revisions were necessary to maintain the accuracy and consistency of the English versions. Where there was no English translation (or none of sufficient quality), a new translation has been prepared.

Each text is supplemented by editorial notes that clarify Rousseau's references and citations or passages otherwise not intelligible. Although these notes do not provide so much detail as is found in the critical apparatus of the Pléiade edition of the *Oeuvres complètes,* the English-speaking reader should nevertheless have in hand the basis for a more careful and comprehensive understanding of Rousseau than has hitherto been possible.

The works contained in this volume are all concerned with the theater. Included are the libretti of Rousseau's operas, his plays, and writings inspired by d'Alembert's proposal for the establishment in Rousseau's fatherland, Geneva. Supplemented by two works included in earlier volumes—the "Preface to *Narcissus*" and *On Theatrical Imitation* (*Collected Writings,* II: 186–198; VII, 337–350)—they make up the total of Rousseau's writings on and for the theater.

We would like to thank M. Robert Thierry, Conservateur of the

Musée Jean-Jacques Rousseau at Montmorency, France, for supplying us with the image of Rousseau used as the frontispiece of this volume. We would also like to thank Stephen Lange for his help in preparing the manuscript, and Stephen Eide for his work on the index.

Chronology of Works in Volume 10

1712

June 28: Jean-Jacques Rousseau born in Geneva.

1729

October: Rousseau begins to study music in Annecy with the music master of the cathedral, Le Maistre.

1730

July: Rousseau passes himself off as a French musician named Vaussore de Villeneuve in Lausanne. His concert is a travesty.

Winter: Rousseau gives music lessons in Neuchâtel.

1732

June: Rousseau leaves his position working on the royal survey in Savoy and begins to teach music in Chambéry.

1737–1740

Rousseau composes his opera *Iphis* at Chambéry, where he also writes *Narcissus.*

1741

May: Rousseau composes *The Discovery of the New World.*

1743

May: Rousseau begins to compose *The Gallant Muses* in Paris after the lack of success of his *Plan Regarding New Signs for Music* and *Dissertation on Modern Music.*

End of year: Probable date of writing of *The Prisoners of War.*

1743–44

Rousseau works as secretary to the French ambassador to Venice, where he becomes acquainted with Italian music.

1745

July: Rousseau completes *The Gallant Muses.*

September: Partial performance followed by complete performance of *The Gallant Muses.* Rousseau substitutes act on Hesiod for earlier version on Tasso.

October–November: Rousseau revises *The Festivals of Ramire* (written by Rameau and Voltaire) at the request of the Duke de Richelieu.

December: Performance of *The Festivals of Ramire.*

1747

Fall: Rousseau writes *The Reckless Pledge* for the Dupin family during a visit to the Château de Chenonceaux. This visit was possibly also the occasion for writing *Harlequin in Love in Spite of Himself.*

1749

Diderot commissions Rousseau to write articles on music for *l'Encyclopédie.*

1752

Spring: Rousseau composes *The Village Soothsayer.*
October 18: *The Village Soothsayer* is performed for the King with great success.
December 18: Unsuccessful performance of *Narcissus.*

1754

Summer: During his visit to Geneva Rousseau plans to write *The Death of Lucretia.*

1753

March 1: *The Village Soothsayer* is performed at the Opéra in Paris.

1757

October 10: Publication of Volume VII of the *Encyclopédie*, containing d'Alembert's article on Geneva.

1758

August: Publication of the *Letter to d'Alembert.*
October 15: Rousseau's response to the anonymous letter written by members of the legal profession.
October 18: Response by members of the legal profession.
End of October: Letter from Leroy to Rousseau
November 4: Letter from Rousseau to Leroy

1759

Letter to J. J. Rousseau by d'Alembert.

1762

November: Rousseau works on *Pygmalion.*

1766

January 13: Rousseau arrives in London accompanied by David Hume.

1767

May 21: Rousseau leaves England to return to France.

1770

April: Rousseau composes some of the music for *Pygmalion*. The rest of it is written by Coignet. It is performed in Lyon.

1778

July 2: Rousseau dies at Ermenonville.

Note on the Text

We are grateful to Simon and Schuster for permission to republish the translation of the *Letter to d'Alembert* and d'Alembert's article, "Geneva," by Allan Bloom. These translations were originally published in *Politics and the Arts: Letter to M. d'Alembert on the Theatre* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1960).

To conform with the established practices of *The Collected Writings of Rousseau,* we have made several changes in the translation. The first set of these are structural matters. We have put d'Alembert's article, "Geneva" before the *Letter* and restored to it the part Bloom puts only in Rousseau's lengthy quotation. To conform with Rousseau's own publication, we have eliminated the division of Rousseau's *Letter* into sections and restored his use of capital letters. In one case (281) we have divided a paragraph to follow the first edition. There are other cases in which Bloom's paragraphing correctly follows the first edition when the recent Pléiade has not. In these we have followed Bloom. The endnotes to the letter are Bloom's with additions or alterations of page citations put in brackets.

Second, to be consistent with other translations in this series, we have changed the translations of several words. The most significant of these are the French terms *moeurs,* which we have translated as "morals," rather than "morals [manners]" or "manners [morals]"; *patrie,* which we have translated as "fatherland," rather than "country"; and *amour-propre,* which we have left as "amour-propre," rather than "vanity." In each of these cases our changes follow Bloom's own practice in his later translation of *Emile* (New York: Basic Books, 1979). We have made several other translations consistent throughout the work, following the terms Bloom uses most frequently. These include *compatriots* (compatriots), *honnête* (decent) as in *honnêtes hommes or gens,* and *la Sexe* (the Fair Sex). We have also changed the spelling of "theatre," to "theater." Finally, we have made the following corrections, mainly of typographical errors or omissions:

264: Cornéille = Corneille
265: poetic theatre = Poetics of the Theater
271: character = soul
272: modest virtue = sweet and modest virtue

277: statesmen = political thinkers
318: head = heard
319–320: inhabitants = souls
337: vicious = wicked
342: discrete = discreet
344: runnings = running

Translating Rousseau's plays and opera libretti poses several problems. The libretti (to *Iphis, The Discovery of the New World, The Gallant Muses, The Festivals of Ramire,* and *The Village Soothsayer*) and one of the plays (*The Reckless Pledge*) are written in verse. We have kept the division into lines, but have made no effort to preserve meter or rhyme. Two of the plays have characters who speak French with an accent. In *The Prisoners of War,* Jacquard is a Swiss German. In *Harlequin in Love in Spite of Himself,* Nicaise is (probably) Provençal. Neither of them speaks very grammatical French. We have given them bad grammar without attempting to reproduce precisely the form that Rousseau gives this grammar. We thank Professor Ourida Mostefai of Boston College for her help in understanding the peculiar language of these characters.

The works by Rousseau can be found in *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1959–1995) Volumes II and V. The correspondence is in *Correspondance complètes de Rousseau,* ed. R. A. Leigh, Volume V (Geneva: Institut et Musée Voltaire, 1967. D'Alembert's article "Geneva" and his "Letter to M. Rousseau" are from *Lettre de M. D'Alembert à M. J.-J. Rousseau, Sur l'Article "Geneve tiré du septième Volume de l'Encyclopédie. Avec Quelques autres pieces qui y sont relatives* (Amsterdam: Chez Zacharie Chatelain & fils, 1769). The Bloom translation appeared before the Pléiade edition of the *Letter to d'Alembert* and is based on the Fuchs edition (Droz: Geneva, 1948). Bloom also consulted the editions of Fontaine (Paris: Garnier, 1889) and Brunel (Paris: Hachette, 1916).

Introduction

As he relates in the *Confessions,* Rousseau arrived in Paris at the age of twenty-nine "with fifteen silver louis ready money, [his] Play *Narcissus* and [his] musical project as [his] only resources."[1] He was the very model of the young man from the provinces hoping to use his talents to find fame and fortune in the big city. There is no evidence that this young man saw himself, at first, as a future political thinker or novelist rather than as a musician and a writer of works for the theater. When he published the work known as the *Letter to d'Alembert on the Theater* almost twenty years later, however, he had found fame for works such as the *Discourses* on the sciences and the arts and on the origin of inequality *and* for his opera *The Village Soothsayer.* He would reach the peak of his popularity as a writer the next year with the publication of his novel *Julie.* By this time he had almost, but not quite, completely abandoned the theater.

The *Letter to d'Alembert* marks a pivotal moment in Rousseau's literary career. In this work he announced his break with the mainstream of the Enlightenment, not only with regard to the immediate issue of the establishment of a theater in Geneva, but also with regard to religion, relations between men and women, and the relative merits of Parisian and provincial culture.[2] Moreover, Rousseau also announced his break with his closest friend, Diderot, at a time when Diderot's *Encyclopédie* was undergoing a crisis with the censors precisely over d'Alembert's article on Geneva. In spite of this personal dispute, the debate with d'Alembert, both in Rousseau's *Letter* and d'Alembert's response is conducted at a very high level. As d'Alembert said, "You have given to literary people an example worthy of you and which perhaps they will finally imitate when they know their true interests better. If satire and insult were not the favorite tone of criticism today, it would be more honorable for those who practice it, and more useful to those who are its object."[3] Thus this debate is important both because of the intrinsic importance of the issues and for the way it is conducted. As d'Alembert had indicated in his original article, the issue of the theater "is perhaps more important than is thought,"[4] because it is connected to issues of fundamental importance for any community.

D'Alembert distinguished Rousseau's criticism from that given by religious authorities, whom he called "the ranters of the pulpit."[5] Later he

says, "In attacking drama the majority of our Christian orators condemn what they do not know; you on the contrary have studied, analyzed, composed yourself."[6] Rousseau attacks the theater from a perspective very different from that of its traditional opponents. Indeed, it has always been found remarkable that Rousseau devoted so much effort both to writing for the theater and to attacking the theater as an institution. His critics were quick to allege an inconsistency between his behavior and his arguments. For example, d'Alembert says, "The talent you have shown for lyric Theater in such happy attempts, as a musician and as a poet, is at least as suited for making partisans in favor of spectacles as your eloquence is for depriving spectacles of them."[7] Several years later Voltaire put the point more brutally as part of a criticism of Rousseau's entire career as a writer: "You have treated authors and philosophers as charlatans, and to prove this by means of an example you have been an author. You have written against the theater with the devotion of a Capuchin monk, and you have composed bad plays."[8] By the time Voltaire made this claim in 1766, this criticism was fifteen years old, having been made by the earliest critics of Rousseau's attack on the arts in the *First Discourse.*

Rousseau responded to the charge the first time it was made. In the "Preface to *Narcissus,*" published in 1753, he begins by provisionally granting that there might be a contradiction between writing plays and poems and attacking the arts. He answers with two arguments.[9] First, he argues that an all too human failure to live up to his own principles would hardly refute the principles themselves. Second, he points out that his youthful writings were done when he still was under the spell of the contemporary prejudice in favor of the arts. The fact that he wrote works for the theater before he understood their corrupting effects should not be held against him. This excuse could apply to his early attempts at opera (*Iphis, The Discovery of the New World, The Festivals of Ramire,* and *The Gallant Muses*) and to his plays (*The Prisoners of War, The Reckless Pledge, Harlequin in Love in Spite of Himself,* and *Narcissus*), all of which were written prior to the *First Discourse*—a time when Rousseau was, by his own later admission, filled with the desire for success in the literary world. In fact, in the "Preface," Rousseau goes so far as to state that he had written *Narcissus* when he was eighteen when he had, in fact, written it several years later and revised it much later.

The excuse of youthful transgressions prior to learning the error of his ways could not apply, however, to *The Death of Lucretia, The Village Soothsayer,* and *Pygmalion.* All of these were written after the *First Discourse,* and the last of them after his attack on the theater in the *Letter to d'Alembert.* Even *Narcissus* was published after Rousseau discovered the

harmful effects of the arts. Should these be regarded as simple lapses? It is not necessary to return to Rousseau's first response to the supposed contradiction: from the beginning he called it a "chimerical" assumption.[10] In fact, unlike his critics, he saw no necessary contradiction between his attack on the theater and his writing of plays and operas.

On the simplest level one could reconcile the alleged contradiction by pointing to one of the conclusions Rousseau reached in the *Letter to d'Alembert.* While arguing for the inherently corrupting effect of the theater, he claimed that the severity of this effect would vary from society to society. In a healthy society, no theater should be allowed. In a less healthy one, however, a theater would be permissible if it took the place of worse vices.[11] As he says, repeating an argument made in the "Preface to *Narcissus,*" in such circumstances, "two hours a day stolen from the activity of vice prevents the twelfth part of the crimes that would be committed."[12] According to this argument, Rousseau's plays could be understood as useful diversions from vice in Paris, but dangerous for Geneva where they would be harmful distractions from more worthwhile activities. Rousseau showed that he was willing to follow this principle in his writings by beginning his preface to the novel *Julie,* "Great cities must have theaters; and corrupt peoples, Novels. I have seen the morals of my times, and I have published these letters. Would I had lived in an age when I should have thrown them into the fire!"[13] His belief in the continued corruption of Europe would explain Rousseau's willingness to publish, or at least preserve, these plays.

Rousseau's willingness to defend his career as a playwright by dismissing his plays as relatively harmless diversions meant for a corrupt audience should not distract attention from the substance of these plays (and opera libretti). Nothing prevents a particular work from being both a diversion and a serious work. Furthermore, it is clear that there are important differences between Rousseau's earliest writings for the stage and the latest, particularly *The Death of Lucretia* and *Pygmalion.* In order to begin to understand the works for the theater, we should consider them, first, in the context of Rousseau's literary career and, second, in that of the arguments of the *Letter to d'Alembert.*

Before Paris

Most of Rousseau's writings for the theater, both plays and operas, do belong to the period prior to his "illumination" on the road to Vincennes and authorship of the *First Discourse.* In addition to writing *Narcissus* (originally conceived as a test of his abilities)[14] before departing for Paris,

Rousseau had also written two operas, *Iphis* and *The Discovery of the New World,* but had burned the music for each.[15] *Iphis* and *Narcissus* were both inspired by stories from Ovid's *Metamorphoses,* which was the source of plots for many contemporary plays and operas. Rousseau was later to draw on the same source for *Pygmalion*. He also made Ovid the main character of the second part of his *Gallant Muses. The Discovery of the New World* draws on the taste for the exotic so common in France in the eighteenth century. Although these early works (*Narcissus,* which was revised with the help of Marivaux later, will be dealt with below) are rather conventional in character, they do have some striking features.

The plot of *Iphis* in its unfinished version that was preserved is most notable for being the story of a young man of apparently low birth rejected (at least at the beginning of the story) by an ambitious young woman of noble birth. Later Rousseau reversed the same plotline twice in rather different ways. In *The Village Soothsayer,* it is the shepherd Colin who finally rejects the upper-class woman who had temporarily distracted him from his shepherdess. In *The Gallant Muses* the low-born poet, Anacreon, wins out over the King. In the first version of this opera Rousseau had included the story of the persecution of Tasso (with whom he identified) because of his love for the Princess of Ferrara, but had been forced to omit this part from the final version because it would not be accepted at court.[16] Thus Rousseau was continuously preoccupied by the issue of love and social class, an issue central to *Julie* as well.

The story of *The Discovery of the New World* is the clash of civilizations rather than classes. There is nothing original in Rousseau's account of the Indians living on the island of Guanahan discovered by Columbus. They are noble savages (a term never used by Rousseau, here or elsewhere) who speak French. Nevertheless, in spite of an inflated praise of France and Europe in the prologue, in the body of the opera Rousseau makes it clear that the victory of the Europeans is owed to their technological, rather than their moral, superiority.[17] This victory, nonetheless, is still presented as having no bad effects on the conquered.

In these earliest efforts it is easy to identify some of the major themes of Rousseau's mature work. Nevertheless, these themes appear more as issues with which he is grappling than as prefigurations of his later understanding. He shows a concern for those who stand outside of European high society, but there is no condemnation of that society as such. Rather than rejecting European high society and going back to their equals (like the African depicted in the frontispiece to the *Second Discourse*), his early heroes strive to be recognized as equals by those from higher civilizations and classes.

Early Years in Paris

During Rousseau's early years in Paris from 1742 to 1750 (interrupted in 1743–1744 by his employment in Venice as secretary to the French ambassador) he continued his theatrical efforts with little success. He managed to sell the rights to *Narcissus* to the Comédie-Italienne, the second major company in Paris, but the work was not performed. The major benefit he received from this was free admission to the theater, a genuine benefit for someone whose restricted finances had forced to restrict his attendance at the theater to two days a week.[18] This contributed to his expertise as a connoisseur of the theater, but not to his fame or fortune.

Rousseau never offered *The Prisoners of War,* also written during this period, for performance and later professed himself somewhat embarrassed to admit the love for France shown in this play once he had become a critic of his adopted home.[19] *The Reckless Pledge* and probably *Harlequin in Love in Spite of Himself* were written only for the domestic enjoyment of his employers, the Dupin family when they spent their vacations in the Loire valley.

Rousseau had a very modest success with a new opera, *The Gallant Muses,* which was performed only in rehearsal at the Opéra. Earlier Rameau had scathingly criticized the portions he had unwillingly listened to in a private rehearsal, claiming that much of it was plagiarized and "maintaining that a part of what he had just heard was by a man consummate in the art and the rest by an ignoramus who did not even know music."[20] Rousseau conceded that the composer François André Danican-Philidor had done some work on the Ovid act, but insisted that the unevenness of the work came from his own reliance on inspiration rather than technical knowledge. Consequently, when he was forced to remove the Tasso section, he included a new one featuring Hesiod. In the *Confessions* he says, "I found the secret of introducing into this act a part of the history of my talents, and the jealousy with which Rameau wanted to honor them."[21] As is frequently the case with Rousseau's insertions of personal matter into his works, this points to a serious intellectual dispute. Rousseau's Hesiod is someone unschooled in the art of composition who excels because he is inspired by a muse. While Rameau understood music to be an art learned in accordance with scientific principles, Rousseau insists on the importance of genius rather than science. This theme, hardly developed here, later became an important part of Rousseau's theoretical account of music.[22]

The closest Rousseau came to tasting success at this time was with *The*

Festivals of Ramire. In this case Rousseau was hired, but never paid, to make changes in Voltaire and Rameau's *The Princess of Navarre,* which was being performed with a new cast. *The Gallant Muses* had brought Rousseau to the attention of the Duke de Richelieu for his ability to write both words and music and he was asked to make the necessary alterations to the older opera. Rousseau's letter to Voltaire asking for permission to make the necessary alterations led to the celebrated writer's response, "Sir, you bring together two talents which have always been separate until now. Here are two good reasons for me to esteem and seek to love you already."[23] Rousseau's participation in this project remained relatively unknown and by the end of 1750, after almost a decade in Paris, his efforts to write for the theater seemed to have ended and he resigned himself to abandoning his youthful dreams of literary success.

After the surprising triumph of the *First Discourse* the next year, however, Rousseau tried his hand at opera once again. This time he composed *The Village Soothsayer,* which had an astonishing success and became the most popular French opera of the eighteenth century. This success, no doubt, contributed to the Comédie-Française's willingness to acquire *Narcissus* from the Comédie-Italienne and stage an anonymous production. Rousseau took pride in his acknowledgment of it when it proved to be a failure,[24] but he did arrange to have it published. Subsequently he began to write *The Death of Lucretia* but never finished it. His final effort for the theater is *Pygmalion,* a lyric scene with musical accompaniment. These four works can be considered as Rousseau's mature works for the stage in that they were all either written or (in the case of *Narcissus*) published after the *First Discourse.* These, in particular, should be considered in relation to the discussion of the theater in the *Letter to d'Alembert.* Two aspects of this discussion are particularly relevant: Rousseau's attack on the French drama's emphasis on love and his attack on the theater as such, independent of particular subject matter.

The Subject of Drama: Love

In the *Letter to d'Alembert*, Rousseau criticizes the French theater in particular for the subjects of its plays. He objects to the emphasis on love, an emphasis that comes "to take the place of situations drawn from Political concerns we no longer have, and of simple and natural sentiments which no longer move anyone."[25] Certainly the focus on love and the absence of political concerns are characteristic of the majority of Rousseau's own writings for the theater. Even in *The Discovery of the New World* the conquest of new world merely forms the backdrop for the

intrigue of love. *The Death of Lucretia* is the only real exception to this rule, and even here love (or its subordination to politics) is crucial. In the *Confessions* Rousseau explains that his goal in beginning to write this play (the only nonmusical drama he wrote after the *First Discourse*) was to reintroduce the heroic character of Lucretia to the French stage.[26] The fact that he failed to complete the play and then wrote the attack on the theater in the *Letter to d'Alembert* gives some evidence that he despaired of the attempt to reintroduce politics to the French theater.[27]

D'Alembert's response to Rousseau's assertions about the predominance of love as a theme of French drama is interesting: rather than defending French plays, he insists on how poorly love is depicted in all but a few of them.[28] Without denying the ubiquity of the topic, in effect he calls for a theater in which love is depicted well rather than pointing to a theater in which it is subordinated to political themes.

In an obvious sense d'Alembert's position could not be farther from Rousseau's. Nevertheless, there is a point at which their views meet. While Rousseau deplores, in principle, making the private passion of love into an object of public display, he admits that the stimulation of genuine feelings of love could serve a useful purpose in certain situations. He says, "The love of humanity and of the fatherland are the sentiments the depiction of which most touches those who are imbued with them, but when these two passions are extinguished, there remains only love, properly so called, to take their place, because its charm is more natural and is more difficult to erase from the heart than that of all the others."[29] He immediately adds, "It is much better to love a mistress than to love oneself alone in all the world." He could concede d'Alembert's point about the sterility of the treatment of love in the French theater while insisting that this sterility arises from the vain self-love characteristic of the French.

That Parisians in particular are prone to this sort of self-love and would be improved by learning how to love a mistress is the theme of *Narcissus; or, The Lover of Himself.* The self-absorption of Valére, the "Narcissus" of the play, is said to be "the universal vice of his age." While Rousseau, in *The Prisoners of War,* questions the trustworthiness of a sophisticated Frenchman's professions of love, *Narcissus* poses the more radical question of whether it is possible for such a man to love at all. Thus, while Rousseau's plays must be included in his criticism of French plays for focusing too much on love, his plays differ somewhat by focusing on the perplexing issue of the possibility of love rather than by taking it as a given. The question of how genuine love is possible remains a theme of Rousseau's mature works such as *Julie* and *Emile.*[30] The account of love given in these works is at the base of the descriptions of lovers in the plays.

Rousseau's fictional student, Emile, falls in love with his Sophie because he has earlier fallen in love with an image of a woman that he has made for himself with considerable help from his tutor. Upon meeting Sophie he gradually comes to love her as he realizes that she corresponds to the image he has made. Rousseau summarizes this account of love by saying, "And what is true love itself if it is not chimera, lie, and illusion: We love the image we make for ourselves far more than we love the object to which we apply it. If we saw what we love exactly as it is, there would be no more love on earth."[31] Rousseau's account certainly stresses how easy it is to be deceived in love; in fact, it almost suggests that it is impossible not to be deceived. Nonetheless, Rousseau does insist, in spite of this idealization, that love can endure only if it is based on something present in the beloved.

Rousseau draws two outcomes from this account, the first of which is a necessary consequence and the second a possible one. First, because there is something profoundly personal in the images with which people fall in love, a wide diversity of types of people are capable of being loved by someone. Rousseau does not conceive of a world in which every man is in love with Helen of Troy and at war with others to win her favor. His love is more democratic and pacific. Second, the images with which people fall in love are theirs, but they are not themselves. Rather than loving those who are simply like themselves, lovers can love those with characteristics that make up for what they lack. As he argues in the *Letter to d'Alembert,* love exists more fully in England than it does in Paris precisely because there "the morals of the two Sexes appear at first glance to be most contrary."[32] Humans are such fragmentary beings that they need someone to compensate for what they lack. If they were self-sufficient they would have no need of love.

In *Narcissus* Valére falls in love with a painting of himself dressed up as a woman. Even in this extreme case of self-love, love exists only because he is unaware that the object of his love is himself.[33] As the drunken servant Frontin says, indicating both Rousseau's source in Ovid and his departure from this source, "It is a portrait. . . . metamor . . . no, metaphor. . . . yes metaphorized."[34] The portrait is a metaphor for the effeminate Valére, but *because* it is a metaphor it is something different from Valére. Put somewhat differently, while Ovid's Narcissus does fall in love with his own reflection, Valére can fall in love only with an altered resemblance, something he not only believes to be different from himself, but that is genuinely different in crucial respects. The play suggests, however, that Valére's self-love and his love for the object of the portrait are founded on a sort of vanity based on external appearance alone. For his

betrothed, Angélique, the events of the play pose the question of whether she can maintain her own self-respect while loving the admittedly handsome and charming Valére. Upon concluding that he loves Angélique rather than the woman in the portrait, Valére declares, "I feel how inferior the feelings born out of caprice are to those that you inspire in me."[35] After learning that he is the original of the portrait, he declares, "I want to love it only because it adores you."[36] He remains a lover of himself, but his self-love is now grounded upon his love for Angélique and her judgment that he is worthy of being loved, rather than upon his self-absorbed vanity.

Key to the transformation of Valére's self-love is his acknowledgment that it is not inevitable that he be loved by every woman he meets, an acknowledgment that comes only when he believes that Angélique may be in love with someone else. Such an acknowledgment takes place in both *The Reckless Pledge* and *The Prisoners of War;* indeed, it can be said to constitute the entire plot of *The Village Soothsayer.* It is also the main part of the art of love taught to Sophie by the tutor in *Emile.* The theme of love now seems to hold a middle ground between properly political themes (of the sort Rousseau attempted in *The Death of Lucretia*) and mere diversion from vicious activities. Love is the concern of people who are neither wholehearted citizens nor incapable of social life. For such people the modern theater can play a genuinely positive role.

Whatever may be the relative merits of plays with love or politics as their subjects, Rousseau's criticism of the theater goes beyond an account of suitable themes for the drama. He attacks the very form of theatricality itself. This attack raises deeper questions about his view of the value of his own plays.

Theatrical Imitation

Central to Rousseau's analysis of the theater in the *Letter to d'Alembert* is his account of the experience of the audience when viewing the play. This experience is more fundamental than the content or message of the plays being performed. That is why Rousseau's reservations about the theater remain even under the implausible assumption that only perfectly wholesome plays would be allowed in Geneva. The essence of this experience is one of identification with the characters portrayed on the stage and forgetting about oneself. A part of the traditional case *for* the theater is that, at least in morally good plays, the identification with exemplary figures is beneficial.[37] Even the very radical attack on poetry in Plato's *Republic* allows that identification with good characters is a good thing.

This view would be compatible with a qualified defense of the theater, or at least of a theater controlled by a strict censorship. Nevertheless, it is d'Alembert, not Rousseau, who recommends the use of strict regulations to make the theater wholesome.

Rousseau makes two responses to this defense of the theater. First, he observes that all audiences most readily identify with characters who display qualities such as wit, charm, and courage—qualities at least as characteristic of the wicked as they are of the decent. Rousseau argues, in particular, that the audience leaves a tragedy with a degree of sympathy for malefactors that it would not have had prior to attending the play. Second, he argues that, even assuming that the audience identifies strongly with decent characters (to the extent that such identification is not simply the manifestation of a feeling that would exist without any help from the play), the emotion is sterile and fleeting. It is d'Alembert who insists that the theater is harmless because the feelings it induces are so weak. Rousseau, on the contrary, insists that the great purity and intensity of theatrical identification stems from the fact that the theatrical experience demands nothing of us beyond identification. The audience feels no obligation to rush to the aid of suffering innocents on the stage. "In giving our tears to these fictions, we have satisfied all the rights of humanity without having to give anything more of ourselves."[38] The result is not improvement in morality, but a self-congratulation on one's own sensitivity.

This is not to say that Rousseau portrays the experience of theatrical identification as wholly negative. As we have seen, he grants that there are worse things than sterile sensitivity and, therefore, that the theater can be good in a place like Paris where even worse qualities tend to predominate. He even argues that the theater of ancient Greece was beneficial because it "presented on all sides only combats, victories, prizes, objects capable of inspiring the Greeks with an ardent emulation and of warming their hearts with sentiments of honor and glory."[39] Consequently, a similar theater could be good in Geneva. "It is certain that plays drawn, like those of the Greeks, from the past misfortunes of the fatherland or the present failings of the people could offer useful lessons to the spectators."[40] As suggested above, his *Death of Lucretia* may well have been a flirtation with the grand project of introducing political (and even republican) drama, not only to Geneva, but to monarchic France. Rousseau, however, denies that material for such plays and playwrights to compose them are readily available.

The principle of this good form of theater is not the abandonment of theatrical identification, but the breaking down of the separation be-

tween theater and public life so that the theater becomes a part of political life rather than a refuge from it. Complementary to this would be the effort to make public life itself more theatrical, and it is this effort that Rousseau recommends for Geneva with his endorsement of boat races, athletic competitions, and dances—turning public life into a sort of theatrical entertainment in which the spectators are simultaneously the actors and the actors identify with their roles rather than standing apart from them.[41]

The radical character of this transfer of the spirit of identification from the theater to the public realm has found many critics, some of whom see it as connected with a sort of totalitarianism. It is argued that Rousseau's emphasis on community spirit comes at the expense of the critical distance from the community necessary for truly free political debate. Rousseau's citizens, it is argued, are so indoctrinated by public spectacles that they are incapable of acting freely. It cannot be denied that there is an element of truth in this criticism.[42] Nevertheless, it is worth noting that, even in his most vivid descriptions of participatory spectacles that contribute to or manifest community solidarity—the account of dancing and of the spontaneous festival of the St. Gervais regiment[43]—Rousseau presents some spectators who maintain some perspective on the shared emotion. In the second instance Rousseau's father is depicted as putting the Genevan practice into a general context by saying to his son, "You are a Genevan; one day you will see other Peoples; but even if you should travel as much as your Father, you will not find their like."[44] The distance provided by comparison is necessary for a complete assessment of the Genevan spectacle. It is also worth noting that the dances Rousseau favors have the function of liberating children to a degree from parental control in the choice of spouses.

Rousseau goes much farther to provide for a critical spirit when he discusses the institution of *circles,* the men's clubs whose existence would be threatened by the establishment of a theater that would absorb all leisure time. In their origin these circles arose during civil discord when "the necessity of affairs obliged us to meet more often and to deliberate coldly and calmly."[45] Thus, even in a community whose citizens identify strongly with each other and with the whole, there is a need for a private place for cool and calm deliberation of public affairs.

That Rousseau is not inclined to leave such considerations solely to a government that demands only passive obedience from citizens is shown by his very willingness to enter the debate over the establishment of the theater. Rousseau's exchange with the French members of the legal profession who objected to his discussion of the courts of honor underscores

this point. To their assertion, "One cannot justly unveil faults of legislation to the eyes of the nation," he replies, "If one of our Citizens dared to make such a speech to me at Geneva, I would take criminal action against him, as a traitor to the fatherland."[46] This is not the response of someone blind to the importance of political dissent even in a healthy community. In sum, while Rousseau does encourage a spirit of identification outside of the theater, he does not abandon critical reflection.

Rousseau's project of making society as a whole theatrical (that is, of making citizens form a constant spectacle for each other) is not really served by any of his plays. He gave up on *The Death of Lucretia,* his one effort at republican drama. Nevertheless, there is one final way in which he presents theatrical identification more positively, this time in the direction of independence from community life rather than in the subordination of identification with the community. This independence is exemplified by his final work for the stage, the lyric scene, *Pygmalion.*

Pygmalion

In the *Letter to d'Alembert,* Rousseau attacks actors for their talent at "becoming passionate in cold blood," of being able to simulate a character other than their own.[47] In other words he insists that actors do not share in the sort of theatrical identification discussed above. D'Alembert defends actors by claiming that this is a harmless talent and one, moreover, that is shared by authors of plays—thereby suggesting that Rousseau is on dangerous ground criticizing others for a talent he too exercises.[48] Rousseau's own account of authorship (at least of theatrical works) is quite different, however. As noted above, he says that when he was composing *The Gallant Muses,* "I was Tasso." Moreover, his Hesiod in the same opera exclaims, "I expect all from the fire that illuminates me / and nothing from my feeble labors."[49] Rather than being "passionate in cold blood," in Rousseau's account, creative authors passionately identify with their subjects.

Pygmalion presents a crisis in the life of such an author, in this case a sculptor who declares, "All my fire is extinguished, my imagination is frozen."[50] Rousseau's Pygmalion has severed himself from his fellow artists, from any concern for an audience for his art, from friendship, and from attachment to living humans. His greatest statue, superior even to the gods worshiped in the temples of the city, is Galatea. Pygmalion identifies himself with this product of his genius so much that he says, "I adore myself in what I have made,"[51] and he wishes to animate it with his own soul. Finally the statue comes to life and expresses her identity with

the sculptor who concludes, "I have given you all my being; I no longer live except through you."[52]

The complexity of this lyric scene comes from Pygmalion's recognizing Galatea both as superior to himself (indeed, as superior to nature itself and to the gods) and as incorporating his very being. Moreover, he is not satisfied that she remain a statue, he wants her to become a woman. As part of a criticism of this piece Goethe remarked, "We are shown an artist who has done work of the utmost perfection and who, having projected his idea outside himself, having represented it according to the laws of art and bestowed upon it a superior life, remains unsatisfied. He must bring the work down to earth."[53] Although Goethe fails to show how the end of *Pygmalion* supports his interpretation, what his criticism does bring out is that Rousseau does not suggest that the dignity of artistic activity comes from the imitation of something higher than the artist such as nature or divinity. Rather, the dignity arises from the superior product of the artist's genius remaining somehow identical to that genius.

Of course, the desire of Pygmalion to "bring the work down to earth" is important. That Pygmalion falls in love with the (nonexisting) woman whose image is the statue shows the resemblance between Rousseau's account of artistic activity and love; Rousseau seems to suggest that lovers are unconscious artists and that poets are self-conscious lovers. Here, unlike Emile, the sculptor falls in love with an object that he knows simply to be his own creation, the statue Galatea.[54] In a way, this play could be considered a response to a question that might be raised about Rousseau's account of love, namely, once we know that love is essentially a product of our imagination, is it any longer possible for us to fall in love? Pygmalion's ability to fall in love with his statue indicates that the answer is yes. With this case, however, Rousseau moves far beyond anything socially or politically relevant. This lyric scene is concerned more with the life of the creative artist than with the life of the lover.

Conclusion

Pygmalion was Rousseau's final work for the stage and it certainly is susceptible to the criticisms of the theater made in the *Letter to d'Alembert.* It is centered on love and its hero is no longer concerned with good citizenship, confirming Rousseau's claim in the *Letter,* "I love the drama passionately."[55] A most important question posed by this work is, Should it be criticized in light of the standard set by the *Letter?* Or does Rousseau's account of Pygmalion provide the standard by which the *Letter*

must be judged? In the *Letter* Rousseau writes to the people of Geneva as a citizen. By this standard all of his plays are lacking. At the same time, it is also possible to write, not for the people, but for others—and it should be noted that, even in criticizing *Pygmalion,* Goethe called it "this marvelous production."[56]

OPERAS, PLAYS, AND BALLETS

Iphis

Tragedy for the Royal Academy of Music

ACTORS

ORTULE, KING OF ELIDE.
PHILOXIS, PRINCE OF MISCÉNE.[1]
ANAXARETTE, DAUGHTER OF THE RECENTLY DECEASED KING OF ELIDE.
ELISE, PRINCESS OF THE COURT OF ORTULE.
IPHIS, OFFICER OF THE HOUSE OF ORTULE.
ORANE, ELISE'S MAID.
A LEADER OF THE WARRIORS OF PHILOXIS.
CHORUS OF WARRIORS.
CHORUS OF ANAXARETTE'S RETINUE.
CHORUS OF GODS AND GODDESSES.
CHORUS OF THE PERFORMERS OF SACRIFICES AND OF PEOPLES
CHORUS OF DANCING FURIES.

ACT ONE.

The theater represents the shore
and in the rear a sea Covered with vessels.

[SCENE I.]
ELISE, ORANE.

ORANE.
Princess at last your joy is complete,
Henceforth nothing will your love disturb.
Philoxis returned, Philoxis enamoured
From the King has obtained the hand of Anaxarette.
She consents to this glorious choice without pain.
The sight of a powerful, victorious sovereign
Effaces the keenest tenderness from her heart.

In her eyes the too constant Iphis is nothing any more.
Only her greatness concerns her.

ELISE.
In vain does all seem to conspire
To favor my passion.
Dear Orane, still I dare not hope
That he might begin to feel my soul's torments.
I know Iphis too well, I cannot delude myself.
His heart is too constant, his love is too tender.
No nothing will be able to end it.
He will even be able to love without requiring return.

ORANE.
What! You would think he dared to refuse
A heart that would satisfy the wishes of a hundred monarchs?

ELISE.
Alas! Already he has only been too able to disdain
The most tender marks of my ardor.

ORANE.
Could he forget his birth, his rank
And the brilliance with which shines the blood
From which the Gods caused you to be born?

ELISE.
From whatever ancestors he received his being,
Iphis knows how to deserve a more illustrious fate
And by a courageous effort
To trace out the path to a brilliant career.
His lovable virtues, his shining valor
Have known how to captivate my heart.
Orane, I would be honored
By a similar weakness
If to my ardor the Ingrate
Responded tenderly.
But hardly touched by my greatness
And still less by my extreme love
He knows well that I love him,
In his heart I am no better for it.
He dares to sigh for Ortule's daughter,

Until today she could divide her love
And in spite of her pride, in spite of all her qualms,
I have seen her moved and love him in turn.
With her secret I alone have been entrusted.
To me she admitted their most tender ardors.
Ah, for my loving heart how hard to bear
Is such a confidence!

ORANE.
However overabundant her ardor
Today she breaks its most charming bonds.
If Love truly reigned in the depth of her soul
Would she forget her vows and her oaths this way?
Let time act, let your charms act,
Soon Iphis irritated by the scorn
Of the beauty by whom his heart is smitten,
Will return weapons to you.

(*Aria.*)
To end your pains
Love will shoot its arrow
Make your attractions glow,
Form gentle chains
To end your pains
Love will shoot its arrow.

ELISE.
Orane, fear intimidates me in spite of myself.
Alas, I feel my tears flowing.
Iphis, how perfidious you would be
If you saw my suffering without sharing it!
But we have delayed long enough, let us seek Anaxarette.
Philoxis is preparing a feast for her here.
I must accompany her. Orane, follow me.

SCENE II.

IPHIS, *alone.*
Love, how much torment do I endure under your law,
How cruel my ills, how extreme my pain.
I am afraid to lose what I love.

Assure myself about her heart as I might,
Alas, I feel that her ardor
Is too weak an assurance
To return my hope to me.
On this shore I already see
A proud rival crowned with laurels
In the midst of a thousand warriors
Presenting her a sweet homage.
In this state does one dare refuse
A lover completely covered with glory?
Alas I cannot let it be known
That his greatness and his victory
By turns devour my soul
With fatal presentiments.
My anxiety increases at every moment.
Anaxarette . . . God . . . would you betray my passion?

(*Aria.*)
What reward for my constant ardor
If you were to be untrue.
Elise was charming and fair.
A hundred times, I rejected her heart.
What reward for my constant ardor
If you were to be untrue.

SCENE III.
THE KING, PHILOXIS.

THE KING.
Prince, today I owe to you
The brilliance with which my crown shines.
Your arm is the sole support
That has strengthened my throne.
You have crushed my proudest enemies
All speak of your victory.
Rebel subjects wished to tarnish my glory,
Your valor has subjugated them.
Judge the greatness of my gratitude
From the overabundance of benefits I have received from you.
You already possess the supreme power.
Be also a happy spouse.

Anaxarette is at my command.
Upon dying Ortule left me that power.[2]
Philoxis, if her hand can gratify your hope
I am prepared to bring about this marriage today.

PHILOXIS.
What is there that I do not owe you, sire.
How sweet my pleasures, how filled with charms they are.
Ah! the fortunate success of my weapons
Is well compensated by such happiness.

(*Aria.*)
Tender love, lovable hope
Reign forever in my heart.

I see the most perfect ardor rewarded
Today I receive the prize for my constancy.
The suffering I have felt
Is nothing next to my happiness.

Tender love, lovable hope
Reign forever in my heart.

I shall possess what I love.
Ah! Philoxis is too happy.

THE KING.
I feel an extreme Joy
In being able to fulfill your wishes.

TOGETHER.
Peace replaces the most severe alarms.
Let us abandon ourselves to the sweetest pleasures,
Let us taste, let us taste all its charms,
We will form no more useless desires.

THE KING.
Glory has crowned your arms
And today hymen crowns your sighs.

TOGETHER.
Peace replaces . . . , etc.

THE KING.
Prince for this work I shall
Prepare everything right away:
You will be a happy lover.
That is the fruit of your courage.

PHILOXIS.
And I to announce my happiness here
Let's to my triumphant and victorious ships
To make the Spoils of my conquest
Into a homage at Anaxarette's feet.

SCENE IV.
ANAXARETTE, *alone.*

(Aria.)
Vainly do I try to dispel my confusion
No, nothing can appease it,
As much as I wanted to oppose it,
My pain redoubles in spite of myself.

In sum then it's true that I marry Philoxis
And I have been able to betray my tenderness.
My heart uselessly concerns itself
With the happiness of the lovable Iphis.
Powerful Gods, must such a sweet passion
From which I anticipated all my happiness
Not enter my soul
Without offending against my glory and my honor?

Vainly do I try . . . , etc.

I still feel all my love
Although ambition inspires me to stifle it
And I am too well aware that, taking turns,
My eyes shed tears and my heart sighs.

But how could I hesitate?
Can I be concerned with two objects?
One is a triumphant king, the other a low-born lover.
Ah! I cannot think about it without blushing
And I feel the difference between them too much
To dare hesitate still.

No, let us discharge
The laws that glory imposes on me.
Let us reign: my rank does not offer
Anything but a crown to wish for
And I would no longer be worthy to wear it
If I desired anything else.

SCENE V.
ELISE, ANAXARETTE, ANAXARETTE'S ATTENDANTS
who enter with ELISE.

ELISE.
Finally Philoxis has returned.
He brings back with him love and victory
And loaded with glory, this lover
With it comes to pay homage to your eyes.
These triumphant ships around this shore
Seem to proclaim these exploits.
Our enemies vanquished and subject to our laws
Are proofs of his courage.
Princess, on this happy day
You will share the brilliance that surrounds him.
With what pleasure does one wear a crown
When one receives it from love.

ANAXARETTE.
I feel the overabundance of my extreme happiness
And I see my most ardent desires fulfilled.
Alas, that I might also be able
To see my tender sighs stop.

(*Trumpets and tympani are heard behind the stage.*)

But what do I hear? What sound of war
Comes to strike its tunes here?

ELISE.
What harmonious sounds, what striking concords!

TOGETHER.
Heavens! What majestic sight appears on this land!

SCENE VI.

Here four trumpeters appear on the stage followed by a large number of magnificently clad warriors.

ANAXARETTE, ELISE, ANAXARETTE'S ATTENDANTS, LEADER OF THE WARRIORS, CHORUS OF WARRIORS.

LEADER OF THE WARRIORS, *to Anaxarette.*
Lovable princess receive
The homage of a tender and respectful lover.
It is on behalf of him that in this place
We come to offer you his vows and his wealth

In this place at the sound of trumpets one sees several warriors clothed more lightly who are carrying magnificent presents at the end of which is a beautiful trophy; they form a procession and, while dancing, go to offer their presents to the princess while the leader of the warriors sings.

LEADER OF THE WARRIORS.
Reign forever over his heart,
Share his extreme love
And may his very passion
Give birth to your ardor.

And you, Warriors, let us sing the happy bond
That is going to crown our wishes.
Let us honor our sovereign,
Let us live under his laws without pain,
Let us be happy forever.

CHORUS OF WARRIORS.
Let us sing, let us sing the happy bond
That is going to crown our wishes.
Let us honor our sovereign,
Let us live under his laws without pain,
Let us be happy forever.

ELISE.
Young hearts in this abode
Meet without waiting longer.
Fear to aggravate love.
Each heart owes in its turn

To become loving and tender.
In vain one wishes to shield oneself.
Everyone must love one day.

LEADER OF THE WARRIORS *with* ELISE.[3]

THE DISCOVERY OF THE NEW WORLD

Tragedy

ACTORS OF THE PROLOGUE.

EUROPE.
FRANCE.
MINERVA.
DESTINY.
A FRENCHMAN.
A FRENCHWOMAN.
THE FRENCH PEOPLE.

ACTORS OF THE TRAGEDY.

THE CACIQUE OF GUANAHAN ISLAND, CONQUEROR OF A PART OF THE ANTILLES.
DIGIZÉ, WIFE OF THE CACIQUE.
CARIME, REJECTED LOVE OF THE CACIQUE.
COLUMBUS, LEADER OF THE SPANISH FLEET.
ALVAR, OFFICER OF THE SAME FLEET.
THE HIGH PRIEST.
NOZIME, OFFICER OF THE CACIQUE.[1]
A SPANIARD.
AN AMERICAN.
AMERICAN PRIESTS, AMERICAN PEOPLE.
SPANISH MEN AND WOMEN.[2]

The Scene is on Guanahan Island.[3]

PROLOGUE.

The theater represents the avenues of the Palace of Glory, the facade of which appears in the recesses.

SCENE I.

EUROPE.

Palace of immortal Glory,
Abode of Heroes and Gods,
I come to this beautiful place to fix
My eternal residence.

Nothing any longer divides the glory that follows me;
From the two jealous sisters, today my equals,[4]
Brilliance has dissipated into a dreadful night:
Europe has seen these haughty rivals fall.
Their luster has been blotted out, their power has been destroyed.

Palace of . . . , etc.

But alas! My happiness is no better fulfilled
By that shining Glory:
In vain its luster increases against my Enemies;
It is disturbed by my Children.

Intoxicated by a poison exhaled by Discord
The cruel ones in my bosom wish to tear each other to pieces.
Gods! Is it thus that destiny grants me
The goods for which it made me hope?
But what do these sounds herald? . . . What new light
Shines in all directions in the abode of the Gods!
What do I see! . . . What, France . . . Ah! my daughter . . . It is she:
Minerva and Destiny lead her here.

SCENE II.

Destiny and Minerva descend in a chariot; France appears between them.

MINERVA AND DESTINY.

Your prayers have been heard. Shed no more tears;
You will see Peace replace the clash of weapons.
Mars vainly aspires to prolong your misfortunes
Your daughter* will take care to curb his rage.

*They present France to her.

EUROPE.
Do you not delude me with a reckless hope?
So many times France has caused me to shed tears.

MINERVA.
France was never against your repose;
And when her foes, defeated in a hundred battles,
Experienced her just Anger,
Her heart wept for the blood spilled by her hand.

France, extend your benefits over the earth and the waves,
With your generous efforts teach the Universe
That it is less glorious to conquer the World
Than it is sweet to make it happy.

Henceforth she has shone enough from Victory;
Charming people shine in gentler battles:
Arts and pleasures offer you a glory
That none shares with you.

DESTINY.
Savor in peace the favors that Heaven prepares for you
Your fate has been put in her hands.*
If some barbarous people remains in your region.**[5]
She will go to tame it, and by an effort still more rare
To bring her gentler morals into their inhuman hearts.
Her efforts, favorable to your desires,
Will make your happiness certain;
She proceeds under the Auspices
Of Wisdom and Destiny.

Destiny and Minerva reascend into Heaven.

EUROPE.
Come my daughter! . . . Oh extreme sweetness!
How happy my fate is!

FRANCE.
Your happiness has always been the object of my prayers.

EUROPE.
Gods! Let all my Children think the same way!

* While showing France.
** Corsica.

TOGETHER.
This day will end my / our misfortunes.
We are bound to each other with the dearest bonds
EUROPE And your tender benefits, those gentle bonds of hearts,
FRANCE And the tender desire to calm your sufferings
EUROPE Attach my happiness to yours.
FRANCE Attaches my happiness to yours.

FRANCE.
You whom a fortunate destiny gather under my laws,
Come French people, let a lovable cheerfulness
Stir up your dances and your voices here.
Europe takes an interest in your captivating games;
Justify her choice.
But do not show yourselves under those terrible forms
That have so often made her tremble
When her children, united to crush me,
Fell under your invincible blows.
Borrow adornment from a gentler attire:
Show yourself such that with the Fair
You seduce the most cruel.
When the Warrior Hero turns into the tender Lover.

SCENE III.
EUROPE, FRANCE, FRENCH PEOPLE.

The French men and women perform set dances that express the gallantry and mildness of that Nation. After which a Frenchman sings the following Aria.

A FRENCHMAN.
Happy lovers, fickle lovers
Inconstancy fixes our hearts
And one sees our homage end
Where favors begin.

Charming cares, sweet art of pleasing
Your reign is among us.
But Love would not know what to do
With hearts neither constant nor jealous.

Happy . . . , etc.

They dance.

A FRENCHWOMAN.
Young Frenchmen when Love enlists you
You soon break your oaths,
But this God compensates us for it
With the vows of new lovers:
To form perfect chains
One would sigh vain sighs.
By the number of our conquests
We will assure our pleasures better.

Young . . . , etc.

They dance.

CHORUS.
Subdue / Let us subdue } our enemies, { subdue / let us subdue } rebel hearts,
Run / Let us run } lucky risks everywhere
And win / let us win } as many Myrtles with the Fair
As Laurels on the field of Mars.

They dance.

EUROPE.
Gratefully I see your games shining . . .

FRANCE, *to her subjects.*
To make them more perfect
Let us present them with nobler objects,
If we can, let us make them worthy of her presence.
To Europe.
Formerly animated by a noble Zeal, your children,
Extending your Empire to Foreign Climes,
Spared you the ills from which your heart sighs.

Let us retrace those times so renowned
When conquering a new world
Victors over the Earth and the wave,
For the first time to the end of the Universe
They carried your chains.
But here we shall recall the memory
Of such fine triumphs.

It is in the Palace of Glory
That Heroes must be celebrated.

Europe and France enter the Palace of Glory while the Chorus sings.

CHORUS.
Endure forever
The tie that binds us.
Always reign together.
Always live in peace.

ACT ONE.

The Theater represents the sacred forest
in which the People of the Island of Guanahan
came to worship their Gods: there one sees several Busts
of Idols on thrones of roughly cut trees.

SCENE I.
THE CACIQUE, CARIME.

THE CACIQUE.
Alone in these sacred woods! Eh, what was Carime doing here?

CARIME.
And who should know better than you do?
I was importuning the Gods about my hidden torments,
I was weeping over my misfortunes. Do you make that a crime?

THE CACIQUE.
Far from condemning you I honor the virtue
That makes you seek from the Gods the Confidence
That fright has just taken away from my defeated people.
A hundred frightful portents troubling our security
Seem to proclaim the Wrath of Heaven;
If our crimes have deserved its vengeance,
Your prayers will send it away from us
As a favor for your innocence.

CARIME.
What fruit do you hope for from this shameful indirection?
Cruel one! You insult my deplorable fate:

Ah! If love makes me guilty
Is it for you to blame my ardor?

THE CACIQUE.
What, you speak of love in these moments of alarm?[6]
Does Love warm hearts frozen with fright?

CARIME.
Your disdain makes my tears flow.
Are there still more ills for me to dread?[7]
When Love is extreme
Does one fear any other ill
Than the coldness
Of the person one loves?
If Digizé boasted of her ardor for you
Would you answer her the same way?

THE CACIQUE.
Digizé belongs to me by eternal bonds.
In sharing my ardor she has completed my throne:
And when we confirm our mutual oaths
Love justifies it and duty orders it.

CARIME.
Love and duty rarely agree.
They reign in a Soul only alternately.
Love makes the pledge
But duty extinguishes the flame.
If hymen has such charming attractions for you
Redouble its sweet pledges with me:
My heart consents to this sharing;
It is a practice established among us.

THE CACIQUE.
What are you proposing to me, Carime, what language!

CARIME.
Cruel one, you[8] take offense at such sweet language.
My Love and my tears excite your wrath.
Happy Digizé at the account of my tears,
You will triumph this day!

Ah! If your eyes have more charms,
Does your heart have as much love?

THE CACIQUE.
Cease such vain regret, your complaint is unjust.
Here your tears wound my eyes.
Carime, like you, in this august refuge
My heart has its secrets to reveal to the Gods.

CARIME.
What! Barbarian! You finally join insult to disdain.
Go, you will no longer hear useless sighs.
You prefer my rage to my betrayed love:
I must serve you as your desire wills.

THE CACIQUE.
How my fate is to be pitied!
But her furies will obtain nothing
In a heart made like mine,[9]
Her tears were much more to be feared.

SCENE II.

THE CACIQUE, *alone.*
Dreadful place, revered place,
Abode of the Gods of this Empire,
Spread your sacred power into hearts.
Gods calm a people gone astray,
Dissipate the[10] delirium of its frightened senses:
Or if your power, in the end, is not enough,
No longer usurp a name that is adored in vain.

I vainly hide it from myself, I myself shudder,
A somber dread disturbs me in spite of myself:
Unhappy Cacique, your virtue deserts you,
For the first time your courage is astonished,
Fear and fright make themselves felt in you![11]

But what is the subject of these frivolous fears?
The vain presentiments of a frightened people?
The roaring of the Idols?
Or the frightening aspect of a bloodstained Star?

Ah! have I captured Victory so many times,
Vanquished so many Rivals, obtained so much glory,
Only to lose it in the end from such weak blows?
Frivolous glory! Ah, upon what do we depend?

But I see Digizé; dear object of my ardor,
Tender Wife![12] Better than the Gods
The sparkle of your beautiful eyes
Reawakens my soul.

SCENE III.
DIGIZÉ, THE CACIQUE.

DIGIZÉ.
Lord your frantic subjects
Seized with fright, with horror, give way to their alarms
And among so many cries, sighs, and tears
It is for you that they fear the most.

Let us not await the effect of the blow that crushes them.
Let us flee, save our lives.
The slightest fear, alas, that threatens their courses
Bears a genuine death to my heart.
Let us flee . . .[13]

THE CACIQUE.
I flee! Their Cacique! Their King!
In sum, their Father! Do you wish that from me,
From the vain terror with which your mind is wounded?
Ah! Digizé[14] what do you propose?
Would a heart burdened with weakness,
Preserve its tenderness
By abandoning its virtue?
Digizé, I cherish the tie that unites us,
I adore your charms, they can accomplish anything with me,
But my People is even more dear to me than you are[15]
And virtue more than both together.

SCENE IV.
THE CACIQUE, DIGIZÉ, NOZIME.

NOZIME.
Summoned by your order, Sire, the Priest
Will soon celebrate the mystery here.

CACIQUE.
And the People?

NOZIME.
Still as anxious as they were.
All shudder[16] at the account of an imaginary evil.
They say that here the Children of the Sun
Must soon come down in pompous array.[17]
All tremble at their very name, and these terrible men
Freed from Death, untouchable by Blows
Must subjugate all to their fatal power.
Too proud of being immortal, their unequaled pride
Makes Kings into their subjects, peoples into their Slaves.
These[18] frightening accounts astonish the bravest.
I have vainly sought the insane authors
Of these rumors. . . .

THE CACIQUE.
Leave us, Nozime, that is enough.

DIGIZÉ.
Great Gods! What will produce this public terror,
What will be your Destiny, unfortunate Cacique?
Alas! Does this frightful doubt trouble no one but me?

CACIQUE.
My fate has been decided; I am loved by you.
Powerful Gods, Gods jealous of my supreme happiness,
The proud children of Heaven aid your plans,
Arm the earth and at your whim, Hell itself:
I can defy both thunder and your shafts.[19]
Deploy your unjust vengeance against me,
Little do I dread its Effects:

In her power Digizé alone
Holds my happiness and my success.

Powerful Gods . . ., etc.

DIGIZÉ.
How far an overabundance of tenderness carries you away!
Ah! Let us not anger the Gods:
The more one claims to defy the Heavens,
The more one feels one's own weakness.

Heaven protector of innocence
Remove our perils, dissipate our fright.
Ah! Such weak humans, who will take up defense
If they dare not hope in you.[20]

THE CACIQUE.
Dear Wife put off useless alarms.
Your tears will grieve me more than vain ills;
When you shed tears, have I
Greater ills to dread?
But I hear the Sacred instruments sound out.
The priests will appear.
Beware of letting be known
The anxiety to which you abandon yourself.

SCENE V.
THE CACIQUE, DIGIZÉ, THE HIGH PRIEST,
THE PRIESTS AND THE PEOPLE.[21]

THE HIGH PRIEST.
Here is the abode of our awful Gods.
They make their dreadful decrees in this place.[22]
Their presence inspires in us such a holy respect.
All must shudder at their sight.

THE CACIQUE.
Holy Priests of the Gods who protect these Isles,
Implore their aid for my people and for me.
Make them banish the fright
That comes to disturb this tranquil place.

From frightful omens
Scatter the terror.
All shake in anticipation
Of a hundred severe ills.

With your terrible accents
Evoke the Destinies
So that if our ills are certain.
They will be felt less.

CHORUS.
Father of the world and days[23]
Be attentive to our prayers
Sun, stay your path
To clarify our mysteries.

THE HIGH PRIEST.
Gods who watch over this Empire
Show your care, be our protectors.
Banish vain terrors;
A sign alone will suffice;
Can vile fright strike hearts
Inspired by your confidence?

CHORUS.
Father of the world . . . , etc.

THE HIGH PRIEST.
For your people, preserve a Generous Prince.
Who is a worthy trustee of your power
Let him be happy as the Gods
Because he carries out their ministry
And is beneficent as they are.

CHORUS.
Father of the world . . . , etc.

THE HIGH PRIEST.
That is enough,[24] be silent.
Let us exert the power of our sacred rites:

May your sublime sounds, your mysterious steps
About the future shielded from curious mortals,
Bring knowledge to my inspired heart.

They dance.[25]

But divine fury disturbs my Spirits,
My senses are stunned, my glances dazzled;
Nature gives way to the united efforts
Of these terrible shocks. . . .
No, new outbursts steady my senses:
With effort my eyes pierce the night of times:
Here the inflexible decrees of Destiny.
"Unhappy Cacique,[26]
Your exploits have withered, your reign has ended;
This day will see your power passed into other hands.
Your People subjugated under an odious yoke
Will lose forever the dearest gifts of the Heavens,
Their liberty, their innocence.
Proud children of the Sun, you triumph over us.
Over our Virtues your Arts give you Victory:
But when we fall under your blows,
Fear paying dearly for our ills and your Glory."

Obscure clouds appear from every side,
The ages are veiled from my feeble glances.

THE CACIQUE.
Stop the vain illusions of your lying Art.[27]

The Priests retire.[28]

CHORUS, *backstage.*
Heaven! Oh Heaven! What new prodigies!
And what winged monsters have appeared on the Waters?

DIGIZÉ.
Gods! what are these new prodigies?

CHORUS, *backstage.*
Heaven! Oh Heaven! . . . , etc.

THE CACIQUE.
Fright disturbs the eyes of this timid people.
Let us go calm its outbursts.

DIGIZÉ.
Sire, where are you running! What vain hope guides you,
What can your efforts do[29] against the decree of the Gods?
But he no longer hears me, he flees. Harsh Destiny!
Ah! in my bitter suffering can I not at least
Save one of his days at the price of a thousand deaths.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT TWO.

The Theater represents a beach broken up with trees and rocks;
at the far end one sees the landing of the Spanish fleet
which is made to the sound of Kettledrums and Trumpets.[30]

SCENE I.
COLUMBUS, ALVAR, SPANISH MEN AND WOMEN OF THE FLEET.[31]

CHORUS.
Let us triumph, let us triumph o'er the earth and the waves,
Let us give Laws to the Universe.
Today our audacity discovers a new world.[32]
It is made to bear our chains.

COLUMBUS,
the Standard of Castille in one hand and a bared Sword in the other.[33]
Climes with which, to our eyes, nature enriches itself,
Unknown to humans, too neglected by the Heavens,
Lose liberty;* but bear without murmur
An even more precious yoke.

Dear companions, yesteryear the timid Argonaut
Made eternal his name in the Fields of Colchos:
To the banks of Gadés the impetuous Alcidas
Limited his journey and his labors;
Serving as our guide an audacious Art
Has subjected to us the waves of the immense Ocean:
But who will celebrate our intrepid band
Equal to all those Heroes?

*He plants the standard on the earth.

Celebrate this great day of eternal memory,
Enter the path of glory through pleasures:
Let your enchanting games[34] shine in every direction:
Astonish the gazes of this savage people.

CHORUS.
Let our enchanting games shine in every direction:
Let us astonish the gazes of this savage people.[35]

They dance.

ALVAR.
Proud Iberia,[36] extend your laws everywhere.
Exercise your Empire over all of nature;
To pile up your brilliant exploits
An entire world cannot suffice.

Master of the Elements, Heroes in Battles,
Let us spread terror, rapine in this place:
Heaven made it our portion
When it made approach to these Climes
Accessible to our courage

Proud Iberia . . . , etc.

They dance.

A SPANISH WOMAN.
Fly, formidable conquerors,
Fulfill your great destinies:
With more lovable weapons
Our victories are more certain.

So that here with an immortal glory
Each is crowned in his turn:
Warriors, you bear the Empire of Isabella,
We bear the Empire of Love,
Fly . . . , etc.

They dance.

ALVAR AND THE SPANISH WOMAN.
Young beauties, terrible warriors,
Unite, subjugate the Universe.
If anyone eludes invincible blows
Let him be put into chains[37] by beautiful eyes.

COLUMBUS.
We have expressed our extreme cheerfulness enough.
We owe our moments to finer[38] outbursts.
Let us go to the inhabitants who live on these shores
To bring the supreme decree of their new destiny

Alvar, do not stray from our vessels.
In these hidden windings disperse your Soldiers;
In a few instants I shall return there myself.[39]
Go, if we have to give battle,
It will soon be time to gain fame for your arms.

CHORUS.
Let us triumph, let us triumph o'er the earth and the wave,
Let us give Laws to the Universe.
Today our audacity discovers a new world.
It is made to bear our chains.[40]

SCENE II.

CARIME.
Outbursts of my fury, love, fatal rage,
Where are you guiding my steps?
Your battles have torn my heart enough:
At least extinguish a fire that I detest in it
Through my tears, or through my death.

But I vainly hope for it, the ungrateful one reigns there yet.
His cruel insults have not been able to release me.
Alas, I still acknowledge that I adore him
From my ardor to avenge myself.

Outbursts . . . , etc.

But what use are these tears! . . . let her cry for herself!
Here is the abode of the children of the sun:
There is the magnificent array of their landing. . . .
What do I come to do here, alas! in my extreme fury?
I come to deliver to them the one that I love
To deliver to them the one that I hate! . . .
Do you dare to hope it, unfaithful Carime?
Are the sons of Heaven made for crime?
They will detest my heinous deeds. . . .

But if they had loved! . . . If they have sensitive hearts . . .
Ah! doubtless they are so if they have received life;
Can Heaven form hearts immune
To the torments of Love?

SCENE III.
ALVAR, CARIME.

ALVAR.
What do I see! What brilliance! Heaven! How can so many charms
Be found in this wilderness?
Of what use will valor and arms be here?
It is for us to bear chains here.

CARIME, *in the act of prostrating herself.*
Pardon my ignorance[41] . . .
Of the homages owed. . . .

ALVAR, *holding her up.*
They would be superfluous.
Where your presence shines,[42]
It is to you alone they are due.

CARIME.
Why then, Lord, do you refuse to be adored?
Are you not Gods?

ALVAR.
Here nothing can be adored but your beautiful eyes.
I judge them from the divine fire they know how to kindle.[43]

But deign to instruct me in my turn
If in this savage place my heart
Ought to admire in you the work
Of nature or of love?

CARIME.
You seduce mine with such sweet language.
I am not used to such[44] in this abode.

ALVAR.
Today love wants to set right through my efforts
Whatever handicap your attractions have here.

These sad[45] places are not made for you:
Deign to follow me to gentler climes.[46]
With such a portion of charms,
Indifference is an insult
That you need not fear from us.

CARIME.
I shall do even more, and I want this Isle
To acknowledge your laws before the end of day.
The frightened People go from refuge to refuge
To seek their safety in the depth of our woods.
The Cacique himself in hidden retreats
Has left his most cherished goods[47]
Such dear hostages . . .

ALVAR.
Do you think[48] that at this price
Our hearts might be satisfied to carry off victory?
Our valor is enough to procure it for us.
Your efforts would only serve to tarnish our glory.
Without assuring it any better.

CARIME.
Thus all resist my just anger.

ALVAR.
Just Heaven! You weep! Can I have displeased you?
Say what must be done.

CARIME.
I must be avenged.

ALVAR.
What unworthy mortal can have insulted you?
Name the rash one.[49]

CARIME.
The Cacique . . .

ALVAR.
He shall die, it is his destiny.
All means are allowed to punish an offense.

There is but a single path for seeking glory,
    There are a hundred for vengeance.
Your tears and your charms must be avenged.
But my eager zeal is not the master here;
Our leader should[50] soon reappear:
I shall prepare everything for following your steps.

TOGETHER.
Vengeance, Love unite.
Carry havoc everywhere;
When you enliven courage,
Nothing resists your blows.

ALVAR.
Anger is more ardent
When what one loves is insulted.

CARIME.
When love is changed to hate
Rage is a hundredfold more potent.

TOGETHER.
Vengeance, Love . . . , etc.

END OF SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

The Theater represents[51] the rooms of the Cacique.

SCENE I.

DIGIZÉ.
Torments of tender hearts, terrors, fatal fear,[52]
Sad foreboding, behold you then fulfilled!
Fatal treason of an unworthy rival,
Black crimes of love, will you remain unpunished?
Alas! In my timid fright
I did not suspect, dear and faithful Husband,
From which perfidious hand
Would come such sad[53] blows for you.

I know your heart too well, the fate that separates us
Will end your life,
And I will not expect that a less barbaric hand
Will cut the course of mine.
Torments . . . , etc.
Feared Cacique, when this happy shore
Resounded everywhere with your glorious deeds
Who would have told you that one would see your Wife Captive
In the Palace of your Ancestors?

SCENE II.
CARIME, DIGIZÉ.

DIGIZÉ.
Do you come to jeer at my deplorable fate?

CARIME.
I come to share your woes.

DIGIZÉ.
Your false pity crushes me
Even more than the position I am in.

CARIME.
I do not know the art of feigning.
With regret I see your tears flow.
My despair caused your unhappiness,
But my heart begins to pity you
Without being able to cure your woe.

Let us renounce violence.
When the heart believes itself outraged
As soon as one has punished the offense
One feels less the pleasure given by vengeance
Than regret at being avenged.

DIGIZÉ.
When the remedy is impossible
You regret the ills to which you reduce me;
It is when you caused them
That you should have felt it.

TOGETHER.
Love, Love, your cruel rages,
Your unjust caprices
Will they not cease tormenting hearts?
Do you make of our sufferings
Your dearest and sweetest things?
Do our torments cause your delight,
Do you nourish yourself with our tears?

Love, Love . . . , etc.

A clash of arms and of combatants is heard.

CARIME.
What noise makes itself heard here!
What shouts! What flashing sounds!

DIGIZÉ.
From the enraged Cacique violent outbursts . . .
Ah! if it is he[54] . . . great Gods! What does he dare to undertake!

The noise redoubles, alas! Perhaps he is going to perish;
Heaven! Just Heaven! Deign to help him.

Discharges of muskets are heard mixed with the sound of the Orchestra.

TOGETHER.
Gods! What roars! What noise! What bursts of thunder!
Is the enraged Sun overturning the earth?

SCENE III.
COLUMBUS, *followed by some warriors,*
DIGIZÉ, CARIME.

COLUMBUS.
That is enough. Let us spare weak Enemies,
Let them feel their weakness with slavery;
With such pride, audacity, and courage,
They will only be all the more punished by it.

DIGIZÉ.
Cruel ones, what have you done? . . . But oh Heaven! It is he!

SCENE IV.
THE PRECEDING ACTORS
THE CACIQUE *disarmed,* ALVAR.

ALVAR.
I have surprised the one who alone and enraged
Sought to penetrate to this very place.

COLUMBUS.
Speak! What did you want in your extreme audacity?

THE CACIQUE.
To see Digizé; to immolate you, and to die.

COLUMBUS.
Your barbaric pride cannot belie itself,
But answer, what do you expect from my just anger?

THE CACIQUE.
I expect nothing from you, go, carry out your plans.
Son of the Sun, for your fortunate success
Give thanks to your Father's thunderbolts
    Which he has entrusted to you;
Without these burning thunderbolts, in these regions your band
    Would have found only death.

COLUMBUS.
Thus you have handed down your own sentence!

CARIME.
    Calm your extreme anger;
To the remorse that tears me apart, grant
Life and Crown to two tender lovers;
I have caused their ills, I want to redress them
    Or if your rigor orders it
    I wish to expire with them.

COLUMBUS.
Does he deign to have recourse to the most petty entreaty?

THE CACIQUE.
Vainly does your pride hope for it
And never have my ilk entreated anyone but the Gods.

CARIME, *to Alvar.*
Obtain this act of mercy if I am pleasing to your eyes.

ALVAR, CARIME, DIGIZÉ.
Pardon two Spouses,[55] two Lovers too sensitive.
Their whole crime is in their love.
Ah, if one day you loved,
Would you in your turn want to
Suffer from[56] unyielding hearts?

CARIME.
Do you not[57] yield at all?

COLUMBUS.
Go, I am vanquished.
Unhappy Cacique, remount your throne;
They return his weapons to the Cacique.[58]
Receive my friendship, it is a good owed to you:
When I pardon you I give way
Less to their tears[59] than to your virtue.
(To Carime.)
Your virtue is not born for these sad Regions.
Sensitive to Alvar's ardor, deign to crown it.
Come to set an example for the astonished Spain
Of knowing how to pardon when one could punish.

THE CACIQUE.
It is you who have just given it.
You return Digizé to me! Through her you have conquered me;
Your weapons had not been able to overcome a rebellious heart.[60]
You have subjugated it through your acts of mercy.
From this moment be certain that you will never have
Any more eager friend, any more faithful subject.

COLUMBUS.
I want you as a Friend, be Isabella's subject.

Henceforth vaunt to us your supposed brilliance,
Europe; in this savage region,
One encounters so much courage,
One finds there more virtue.

Oh you whom from the two ends of the world
Destiny brings together in this place,
Come, separate peoples, to form lovable games.
Let Echo answer your concord.
Delight hearts and eyes.

Never will a worthier celebration
Attract your glances.
Our games are the children of the Arts
And the World is their conquest.

Hurry, hasten, come from all directions,
O you whom from the two ends of the world
Destiny brings together in this place
Come, separate peoples, to form lovable games.[61]

CHORUS.
Let's hasten, let's hasten, let's form lovable games.
Let Echo answer our concord
Let us delight hearts and eyes.

They dance.

AN AMERICAN.
There is no savage heart
For Love.
And once one pledges oneself
In this abode
It is without reserve.
No other pleasures
Than sweet chains.
Our only pains
Are our vain desires,
When inhuman ones
Cause our sighs.

There is no . . . , etc.

They dance.

A SPANIARD.

Let's drift,
Let's skim
The Waves.
Our pleasures will have their turn.
To discover
New worlds
Is to offer
New mirth for Love.

The farther Phoebus extends
His scope,
The farther he spreads
His light,
Love makes its fires felt.
Sun you cause our lives, Love makes them happy.

Let's drift . . . , etc.

DIGIZÉ.[62]

Triumph Love, reign in this place.
Return of my happiness, sweet rapture of my ardor,
Charming pleasures, pleasures of the Gods,
Flow in deep drafts in my Soul,
Flow, delightful torrents.
Peaceful tranquillity
Of an innocent ardor,
You do not exclude lovable pleasure from hearts.
Sweet pleasures make up felicity,
But it is you that make it constant.

Triumph . . . , etc.

They dance.

CHORUS.

Spread over the whole Universe
Both our treasure and abundance.
From our Alliance unite
Two worlds separated by the abyss of the Sea.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

The Prisoners of War

Comedy

ACTORS.

GOTERNIZ, a Hungarian Gentleman.
MAKER, a Hungarian.
DORANTE, a French officer, Prisoner of War.
SOPHIE, Goterniz's daughter.
FRÉDÉRIC, a Hungarian officer, Goterniz's son.
JAQUARD, a Swiss, Dorante's valet.

The Scene is in Hungary.

SCENE I.
DORANTE, JACQUARD.

JACQUARD.

By my faith sir, me understand nothing about this country, Hungary, der wein ist gut, und der men vicked: is not natural, that.

DORANTE.

If it doesn't happen to be going well for you here, nothing obliges you to stay. You are my Servant, and not a prisoner of War as I am. You can leave whenever you please.

JACQUARD.

Oh! Me not to leave you. Me not to want to be more free than my master.

DORANTE.

My poor Jacquard, I am grateful for your attachment; it would console me in my captivity, if I were capable of consolation.

JACQUARD.

Me not to put up with you alvays, alvays, fretting; trink like me, you vill be consoled right avay.

DORANTE.

What consolation! Oh France, oh my dear fatherland! How this barbaric region makes me feel your worth! When shall I see your happy abode again? When will it end, this shameful inactivity in which I am languishing while my fellow citizens gather Laurels of victory.

JACQUARD.

Oh! You haf fought brafely. The enemies you haf killed, are sicker than you are for it.

DORANTE.

Learn that, in the Blood that gives me life, Glory acquired serves only as a spur for seeking more. Learn that whatever zeal one might have for fulfilling one's duty for itself, the ardor is increased further by the noble desire to deserve the esteem of one's master while fighting under his eyes.

JACQUARD.

Gut, gut, you soon to be taken from diese prison. Monsir your vatter has written dat he to work for make you exchange.

DORANTE.

Yes, but the time for it is still uncertain, and yet the King makes new conquests every day.

JACQUARD.

By Gott! Me to be fery content you to go only to those he vill make further. But you not to be any more in love, you want to leave so much?

DORANTE.

In love! With whom? . . . *(Aside.)* Has he fathomed my secret ardor?

JACQUARD.

There, mit dat Damsel Claire. Mit dat pretty daughter of our Burger for whom you to do so many sweet little things. *(Aside.)* Oh! I haf many other suspicions but must appear to have none.

DORANTE.

No, Jacquard, the love you assume I have is not at all capable of reducing my eagerness to return to France. All regions are unimportant for love. The world is full of Beauties worthy of the services of thousands of lovers, but one has only a single fatherland to serve.

JACQUARD.

Mit regard to Beauties, do you to know that the day after tomorrow our brute of a burger marries the daughter of Monsir Goterniz?

DORANTE.

What! What are you saying!

JACQUARD.

Dat der marriache of Monsir Maker mit Mamsel Sophie that was put off until the arrival of das Damsel's bruder, is to be to conclude in two days because he vas exchanged sooner than they to have thought, and he to arrive today.

DORANTE.

Jacquard, what are you telling me? How do you know?

JACQUARD.

By my faith, I haf chust it learned while trinking bottle mit ein valet of das house.

DORANTE.

(Aside.) Let's hide my confusion! . . . *(Aloud.)* It occurs to me that the messenger should have arrived; go see if there isn't any news for me.

JACQUARD.

(Aside.) The Devil! There to be ein news too many as what I believe! *(Returning.)* Monsir, I not to know where to be the outlet of that news.

DORANTE.

You have only to speak to Miss Claire, who, to keep my letters from being opened in the post, has taken it upon herself to receive them under a convenient address, and to hand them over to me secretly.

SCENE II.

DORANTE.

What a blow to my passion! It has happened then, too lovable Sophie, I must lose you forever, and you are going to become the prey of a rich, but ridiculous and boorish old man. Alas! Without you having yet avowed it to me, everything was beginning to indicate to me the most tender reciprocation on your part. No, although her father's unjust

prejudices against the French might be an invincible obstacle to my happiness, nothing less than such an event was required to assure the sincerity of the wishes I made to return promptly to France. Isn't the ardent testimony that I give about them rather the effort of a mind that rouses itself by the consideration of its duty, than the effects of sufficiently sincere zeal? But what am I saying, ah! Glory should not grumble about it at all, such beautiful ardor was not made to harm it! A heart is never enough in love; at least it does not have as much regard for the esteem of its mistress, when it hesitates to prefer to her its duty, its country, and its King.

SCENE III.
MAKER, DORANTE, GOTERNIZ.

MAKER.

Ah! Here is the Prisoner who is in my custody. I must warn him about the manner in which he must behave with my intended. For these Frenchmen who, they say, are so unconcerned about their own wives, are most affable with those of other people. But I do not want that sort of dealing in my home. And at least I intend for my children to be from my own country.

GOTERNIZ.

You have strange opinions about my daughter.

MAKER.

My God, not so strange. I think that mine is as worthy, and if . . . But let's say no more about that . . . Mr. Dorante!

DORANTE.

Sir?

MAKER.

Do you know that I am getting married?

DORANTE.

What does that matter to me?

MAKER.

It matters to me that you discover that I do not believe my wife should live in the French way.

DORANTE.
So much the worse for her.

MAKER.
Ah yes, but so much the better for me.

DORANTE.
I know nothing about it.

MAKER.
Oh, we aren't asking your opinion about it! I am only warning you that I wish never to find you with her, and that you avoid giving me any suspicions about her conduct in that Regard.

DORANTE.
That is only too just, and you will be satisfied.

MAKER.
Ah! For once he is obliging; what a miracle.

DORANTE.
But I count on you contributing as much as necessary from your side.

MAKER.
Oh! Without a doubt, and I shall take care to order my wife to avoid you on every occasion.

DORANTE.
Avoid me! Don't do that. That isn't what I want to say.

MAKER.
What?

DORANTE.
On the contrary, you are the one who should avoid taking notice of the time that I pass with her. I shall be attentive to her only as discreetly as I can, and you, as a prudent husband, will see only what pleases you.

MAKER.
What the Devil! You are joking; and that is not what is due me.

DORANTE.

Nevertheless, that is all I can promise you, and that is even all that you have asked me for.

MAKER.

By God, that is beyond me; one must be wild for other people's wives to employ such language in their husbands' face.

GOTERNIZ.

In truth, My Mr. Maker, your remarks make me take pity and your anger makes me laugh. What answer do you want the Gentleman to make to an exhortation as ridiculous as yours? The proof of the purity of his intentions is the very language he employs with you: if he wanted to deceive you, would he take you as his confidant?

MAKER.

What do I care about that, only a fool would rely on it. I do not want him to associate with my wife at all, and I shall see to it.

DORANTE.

Soon enough. But since I am your prisoner and not your Slave, you will not take it badly if upon every occasion I fulfill toward her the duties of politeness that my Sex owes to Hers.

MAKER.

Ah! The devil: so many acts of politeness for the wife only tends to insult the husband. That makes me lose my patience . . . we shall see. We shall see. . . . You are wicked, Mr. Frenchman. Oh, by God, I shall be even more so than you are.

DORANTE.

I, wicked! You are mistaken, I am so only in war and you have very much the appearance of being so only at home.

GOTERNIZ.

Calm down, My Mr. Dorante! He is from a nation . . .

DORANTE.

Yes, although true valor might be inseparable from generosity, in spite of the cruelty of yours I ought to consider its bravery. But does that give him the right to insult a soldier who gave way only when outnumbered,

and who, I think, has shown enough courage to deserve to be respected, even in his misfortune!

GOTERNIZ.

You are right. Laurels are not any less the reward for courage than for victory. We ourselves do not consider ourselves any less glorious since we have given way to the triumphant arms of your King, since in defending ourselves we showed the same valor that he employed in attacking us. But here is Sophie.

SCENE IV.
GOTERNIZ, MAKER, DORANTE, SOPHIE.

GOTERNIZ.

Draw near, my daughter, come to greet your husband. Don't you accept his hand with pleasure?

SOPHIE.

If my heart were the master of it, it would not choose a husband anywhere but here.

MAKER.

Extremely good, beautiful darling; but . . . *(To Dorante.)* What! You are not leaving?

DORANTE.

Shouldn't you be flattered that my admiration confirms the goodness of your choice?

MAKER.

Since I didn't choose her for you, your approval hardly appears necessary to me here.

GOTERNIZ.

It seems to me that this is beginning to go on too long for jesting. You see, Sir, that Mr. Maker is uneasy with your presence; it is an effect that a knight of your countenance can naturally produce upon the most reasonable husband.

DORANTE.

Very well, then he must be freed from an inconvenient spectator; also

I cannot bear the Tableau of such a disproportionate union. Ah! Sir! How can you yourself consent that so many perfections be possessed by a man so ill made for knowing them?

SCENE V.
MAKER, GOTERNIZ, SOPHIE.

MAKER.

By God! There is a very extraordinary nation, and very inconvenient Prisoners. The valet drinks my wine, the master dallies with my daughter! *(Sophie makes a face.)* They live in my house as if they were in a conquered country!

GOTERNIZ.

That is the most ordinary life for the French. They are all accustomed to it.

MAKER.

Good excuse, my faith! Wouldn't it also be following the custom for me to approve of him making me a cuckold?

SOPHIE.

Ah! Heaven! What a man!

GOTERNIZ.

I am as scandalized by your language as my daughter is unworthy of it. Learn that a husband who shows his wife neither esteem nor confidence authorizes her, as much as it depends on him, not to deserve them. But it's getting late: I am going to ride in order to get home before my son who is to return this evening.

MAKER.

I am not leaving you. I shall go with you, if you please.

GOTERNIZ.

So be it. To be sure, I have lots of things to say to you which we can converse about on the way.

MAKER.

Farewell, darling. I'm anxious that we be married to take you to see my fields and my horned cattle. I have the finest pen of them in Hungary!

SOPHIE.

Sir, such animals scare me.

MAKER.

Go along, go along, Missy. With me you will soon be cured of that.

SCENE VI.

SOPHIE.

What a husband! What a difference between him and Dorante in whom the charms of love are redoubled by the grace of his manners and his way of expressing himself! But alas! He is not at all made for me. My heart hardly dares to admit to itself that it loves him and I should congratulate myself only too much for not having admitted it to him. Also, if he was faithful to me, my Father's goodness would leave me some ray of hope, in spite of his bias and his pledges. But Maker's daughter shares Dorante's love; no doubt he tells her the same Things he tells me. Perhaps she is the Only One that he loves. Fickle Frenchmen! How fortunate are women that your infidelities keep them on guard against your seductions! If you were as constant as you are lovable, what hearts would resist you? Here he is. I would like to flee, and I cannot make up my mind to do so: I would like to appear calm to him and I feel that I love him so much that I cannot hide my resentment from him.

SCENE VII.
DORANTE, SOPHIE.

DORANTE.

It is true then, Madame, that my ruin has come, and that I am going to lose you forever. I would die from it, without a doubt, if death were the worst form of suffering. I shall live only to carry you in my heart for longer, and, by means of my conduct and my constancy, to make myself worthy of your esteem and your regrets.

SOPHIE.

Can faithlessness borrow such noble and passionate language?

DORANTE.

What are you saying? What a welcome! Is this the just pity that my Feelings deserve?

SOPHIE.

Your suffering is great, indeed, to judge of it by the Care you have taken to indulge yourself with consolations.

DORANTE.

I, consolations! Is there any for your loss!

SOPHIE.

That is to say: is there need of any?

DORANTE.

What! Fair Sophie? Can you . . .

SOPHIE.

Save, I beg you, the familiarity of these expressions for the fair Claire, and know that Sophie whatever she might be, fair or ugly, is all the less concerned with being so in your eyes since she believes you are as bad a judge of beauty as you are of merit.

DORANTE.

The rank that you hold in my Esteem and in my heart is a proof of the contrary. What! You believed I am in love with Maker's daughter?

SOPHIE.

Truly, no. I do not do you the honor of believing you have a heart made to love. You are like all the young people of your country, a man extremely convinced of his own perfections, who believes himself destined to deceive women, by playing at love with them, but who is not capable of feeling it.

DORANTE.

Ah! Can it be that you confuse me with that class of lovers without feelings and without delicacy because of some vain jesting that only proves that my heart had no share in it at all, and that it was entirely yours?

SOPHIE.

The proof appears peculiar to me. I would be curious to learn the frivolous subtlety of this French Philosophy.

DORANTE.

Yes, I call as witness of the sincerity of my ardor that very conduct for

which you reproach me. I have said sweet nothings to others, it is true. I have joked around with them. But are this jesting and this cheerfulness the language of love? Do I express myself to you with this tone? This timid bearing, this emotion, this respect, these tender Sighs, these sweet tears, these raptures that you make me experience, do they have anything in common with that sprightly and playful air that politeness and the tone of the social world make us take on with women to whom we are indifferent? No, Sophie, laughter and gaiety are not the language of Feeling at all. Genuine love is neither reckless, nor giddy; fear[1] makes it circumspect; it risks less because of the knowledge of what it has to lose, and as it wants it more from the heart than from the person, it hardly risks the esteem of the person it loves in order to acquire possession.

SOPHIE.

That is to say, in a word, that satisfied with being tender for your mistresses, you are only gallant, jesting, and reckless around women whom you do not love at all. There are constancy and maxims of a new savor, extremely convenient for knights; I do not know whether the beauties of your country are just as satisfied with them?

DORANTE.

Yes, Madame, that is reciprocal, and they have at least as much interest as we do in Establishing them.

SOPHIE.

You make me tremble for the women capable of giving their heart to lovers formed in such a School.

DORANTE.

Ah! Why these illusory fears? Doesn't everyone agree that this gallant and polite interchange that brings such pleasantness into Society is not at all love? It is only its Supplement. The number of hearts truly made for loving is so small, and among those there are so few who meet each other, that everything would soon languish if wit and sensual delight did not sometimes take the place of heart and feeling. Women are not at all the dupes of the lovable follies that men commit with them. We are the same in relation to their coquetry, they seduce our senses alone. This is a faithful interchange, in which each reciprocally gives himself out only for what he is. But it must be admitted to the shame of the heart, that this happy jesting is often better recompensed than the most touching expressions of an ardent and sincere passion.

SOPHIE.

You have come precisely to the point. You love me, you say, uniquely and perfectly; all the rest is only a witty game; I want it to be so, I believe it to be so. But then I still need to know what sort of pleasure you can find in paying, in a different savor, court to other women, and nevertheless still seeking from them the reward for genuine love.

DORANTE.

Ah! Madame! what a time for getting me tied up in dissertations? I am going to lose you, alas! And you want my Mind to be occupied with other things than its suffering.

SOPHIE.

That reflection could not come any less appropriately; it must be done sooner, or not done at all.

SCENE VIII.
DORANTE, SOPHIE, JACQUARD.

JACQUARD.

Psst. Psst. Monsir, Monsir.

DORANTE.

I believe I am being called.

JACQUARD.

Oh, me to come, since du not to go.

DORANTE.

Well? What is it?

JACQUARD.

Monsir, mit der permission of my lady. To be ein little writing.

DORANTE.

What? A letter?

JACQUARD.

Precisely.

DORANTE.

Give it, then.

JACQUARD.

Vell, no. Mamsel Claire ordered me not giff it you except in big secretly.

SOPHIE.

Mr. Jacquard is exact, he wants to follow his orders.

DORANTE.

Give it still, you lout. This is a very bad time for you to be playing at mystery.

SOPHIE.

Stop making yourself uneasy. I am not at all awkward and I am going to withdraw so as not to constrain your eagerness.

SCENE IX.
SOPHIE, DORANTE.

DORANTE.

(Aside.) This letter from my Father is giving her fresh suspicions, and comes exactly at the right time to dissolve all of them. *(Aloud.)* Ah what, Madame, you do not flee me?

SOPHIE.

(Ironically.) Would you be disposed to put me halfway into your confidence?

DORANTE.

My secrets don't interest you enough for you to want to share them.

SOPHIE.

It's just the opposite. They are too dear to you for you to lavish them on me.

DORANTE.

It would ill befit me to be stingier with them than with my own heart.

SOPHIE.

Do you also keep them in the same place?

DORANTE.

That doesn't depend on anything but your willingness.

SOPHIE.

In this coolness there is a mischief that I am tempted to punish. You would be very perplexed if, taking you at your word, I asked you to make this Letter known to me.

DORANTE.

I would only be extremely surprised. You take too much pleasure in nursing unjust feelings on my account to seek to destroy them.

SOPHIE.

You are relying a great deal on my discretion. . . . I see that it will be necessary to read the letter in order to confound your recklessness.

DORANTE.

Read it in order to convince yourself of your injustice.

SOPHIE.

No, begin by reading it to me yourself, I shall enjoy your confusion all the more.

DORANTE.

We shall see. *(He reads.)* "What joy [I have], my dear Dorante . . .

SOPHIE.

My dear Dorante! The expression is gallant, truly.

DORANTE.

What joy I have, "my dear Dorante, to be able to put an end to your pains."

SOPHIE.

Oh, I don't doubt it. You have so much humanity!

DORANTE.

"At last you are now freed from the chains in which you have been languishing."

SOPHIE.

I shall not languish in yours.

DORANTE.

"Hasten to come and rejoin me."

SOPHIE.
That is called being in a rush!

DORANTE.
"I burn to embrace you . . ."

SOPHIE.
Nothing is more convenient than to declare one's needs frankly.

DORANTE.
"You have been exchanged for a young officer who is going back at present to where you are."

SOPHIE.
But, I don't understand any of it anymore.

DORANTE.
"Dangerously wounded, he was taken prisoner in an action in which I found myself . . .

SOPHIE.
An action in which Miss Claire found herself?

DORANTE.
Who is talking to you about Miss Claire?

SOPHIE.
What! Isn't that letter from her?

DORANTE.
No truly; it is from my Father, and Miss Claire has only served as the means to make it reach me. Look at the date and the Signature.

SOPHIE.
Ah! I can breathe.

DORANTE.
Listen to the rest. *(He reads.)* "As a result of help and effort I have had the happiness to save his life. I have found so much gratitude in him, that I cannot congratulate myself too much for the services I have rendered him. I hope that upon seeing him you will share my friendship for him, and that you will display it to him."

SOPHIE.

(Aside). The story of this young officer is so closely related to . . . Ah! if it were he . . . all my doubts will be clarified tonight.

DORANTE.

Fair Sophie: you see your error. But what good is it to me for you to be acquainted with the injustice of your suspicions? Will I be better rewarded for my fidelity because of it?

SOPHIE.

It would be useless for me still to wish to disguise from you the Secret of my heart. It has burst out too much along with my resentment. You see how much I love you, and you ought to estimate the worth of this admission from the pains it has cost me.

DORANTE.

Charming admission! Why must such sweet moments be mixed with alarms, and must the day on which you share my ardor be the one that makes it most to be pitied?

SOPHIE.

It might still be less so than you think. Does love lose courage so soon, and when one loves enough to undertake everything, does one lack resources for being happy?

DORANTE.

Adorable Sophie! What raptures you cause for me! What, your kindness! . . . I could! . . . Ah! Cruel one! You promise more than you want to deliver.

SOPHIE.

I! I promise nothing. How lively your imagination is? I am afraid that we don't understand each other.

DORANTE.

What?

SOPHIE.

The sad wedding that I fear is not at all so completely settled that I cannot flatter myself at obtaining at least a delay from my father . . . prolong your stay here until the peace, or more favorable circumstances have dissolved the prejudices that set him against you.

DORANTE.

You see the eagerness with which they are calling me back: can I hasten too much to go to atone for the idleness of my Enslavement? Ah! If love must make me neglect the care of my reputation, must it be on such dubious hopes as the ones with which you flatter me? Let the certainty of my happiness at least serve to make my fault excusable. Consent that secret bonds . . .

SOPHIE.

What do you dare to propose to me? Is a heart that is very much in love so little sparing of the glory of what it loves? You offend me profoundly.

DORANTE.

I foresaw your response, and you have set down mine. Forced to be unhappy or guilty, it is the very excessiveness of my love that makes me sacrifice my happiness to my duty, since I cannot make myself worthy of possessing you by ruining you.

SOPHIE.

Ah! How easy it is to display fine maxims when the heart combats them weakly! Among so many duties to fulfill, do those of love, then, count for nothing, and isn't it only vanity to cost me the regrets that have made you desire my tenderness?

DORANTE.

I expected pity and I receive reproaches. You have, alas! only too much power over my virtue, I must flee so as not to succumb. Lovable Sophie, too worthy of a fine region, deign to receive the farewells of a lover who would live at your feet only if he could preserve your esteem by sacrificing glory to love. *(He embraces her.)*

SOPHIE.

Ah! What are you doing!

SCENE X.

MAKER, FRÉDÉRIC, GOTERNIZ, DORANTE, SOPHIE.

MAKER.

Oh! oh! Our intended! My gosh! How you behave! It is with this Gentleman then that you are rehearsing for[2] the wedding? I am obliged

to him, by my faith. Well, then, father-in-law, what do you say about your dear offspring? Oh! I would damn well have wanted for us to have seen it four times more just to teach him not to be so trusting.

GOTERNIZ.

Sophie? Could you explain to me what this strange behavior means?

DORANTE.

The explanation is completely straightforward. I just received notice that I have been exchanged, and thereupon, I was taking leave of Mademoiselle who, just as you have, Sir, has shown much kindness to me during my Stay here.

MAKER.

Yes, kindness. Oh, that's obvious.

GOTERNIZ.

By my faith, Mr. Maker, I do not see that there is so much to inveigh against for a simple formal display of compliments.

MAKER.

I do not at all care for all these compliments in the French manner.

FRÉDÉRIC.

So be it. But since my Sister is not yet your wife, it seems to me that your compliments are hardly suitable for making her want to be.

MAKER.

Ah, by God, Sir, if your stay in France has taught you to applaud all the foolishness of women, learn that Jean Matthias Maker's flattery will not nourish their pride.

FRÉDÉRIC.

From that, I believe it.

DORANTE.

I will admit to you, Sir, that equally smitten by the charms and the merit of your adorable daughter, I would have brought about my supreme felicity by uniting my fate to hers, if the cruel prejudices that have been inspired in you against my nation had not put an invincible obstacle to the happiness of my life.

FRÉDÉRIC.
Father, that is doubtless one of your Prisoners?

GOTERNIZ.
It is that officer for whom you have been exchanged.

FRÉDÉRIC.
What! Dorante!

GOTERNIZ.
Himself.

FRÉDÉRIC.
Ah! What joy for me to be able to embrace my benefactor's son.

SOPHIE.
(Joyful.) It was my brother, and I guessed it.

FRÉDÉRIC.
Yes, Sir, beholden for my life to the Gentleman your father, how sweet it would be to show you my gratitude and my attachment by some proof worthy of the services that I received from him.

DORANTE.
If my Father has been fortunate enough to discharge the duties of humanity toward a knight of your merit he should congratulate himself all the more. Nevertheless, Sir, you are acquainted with my feelings for Mademoiselle your sister; if you deigned to give my ardor your protection, you would discharge yourself beyond your obligations; to make an honorable man happy is more than to save his life.

FRÉDÉRIC.
My father shares my obligations and I hope very much that, sharing my gratitude as well, he will not be any less eager than I am to bear witness to you of it.

MAKER.
Yesss: it seems to me that I am playing the part of a rather pretty Character here.

DORANTE.
As usual.

GOTERNIZ.

I admit, my son, that I had believed I saw in the Gentleman some inclination for your sister; but to forestall the declaration that he might have made to me about it, I have so well manifested on every occasion the antipathy and dislike that separate our nation from his that up to now he was spared steps that would be useless on the part of an Enemy with whom, whatever obligation I might have to him otherwise, I cannot nor ought not to establish any connection.

MAKER.

Without a doubt, and it is a crime of treason for Mademoiselle to want to appropriate for herself the prisoners of the Queen this way.

GOTERNIZ.

In sum, I hold that this is a nation with which it is better in every respect to have no commerce; too prideful as friends, too formidable as enemies, lucky is the one who has no bone to pick with them.

FRÉDÉRIC.

Ah! Father, leave aside these unjust prejudices. What do you know about that lovable people whom you hate, and who perhaps would have no defect if it had fewer virtues. I have seen this happy and brilliant nation up close, I have seen it peaceful in the midst of war, cultivating the sciences and fine arts and given over to that charming sweetness of character that makes it always receive equally well all the peoples of the world, and makes France in some manner the common fatherland of the human race. All men are the brothers of the French. War enlivens their valor without exciting their anger. A brutal fury does not make them hate their enemies at all, a foolish pride does not make them disdain them at all. They battle them nobly, without slandering their behavior, without insulting their glory, and while we wage war on them as enraged men, they are content to wage it on us as heroes.

GOTERNIZ.

For that, one cannot deny that they show themselves to be more humane and more generous than we are.

FRÉDÉRIC.

Ah! How would they not be that way under a master whose goodness equals his courage? If his victories make him feared, should his virtues make him any less admired? Formidable conqueror, at the head of his

armies, he seems to be a tender father in the midst of his family, and forced to subdue the pride of his enemies, he subjugates them only to increase the number of his Children.

GOTERNIZ.

Yes, but with all his bravery, not content to subjugate his enemies by force, does this Prince believe that it is very fine to also use artifice and to seduce as he does the hearts of Foreigners and of his prisoners of war?

MAKER.

Shush! How base it is to debauch someone else's subjects this way. Oh fine! Since he goes about things that way, I am of the opinion that one should punish all those of us who take it into their heads to say anything good about him.

FRÉDÉRIC.

It will then be necessary to chastise all your warriors who fall under his chains; and I foresee that that will not be a small task.

DORANTE.

Oh! My prince! How sweet it is for me to hear the praises of your virtue torn from the mouth of your enemies. These are the only encomiums worthy of you.

GOTERNIZ.

No, the title of enemies ought not to prevent us from doing justice to merit. I even admit that commerce with our prisoners has very much made me change opinion with regard to their nation. But consider, my son, that my word has been given, that it would be a bad business for me to consent to a union contrary to our customs and our prejudices, and that, to say it all in sum, a woman never has enough of a right to count on a Frenchman's heart for us to be able to assure ourselves of your sister's happiness by uniting her to Dorante.

DORANTE.

I believe, Sir, that you very much want me to win, since you attack me on the strongest side. It is not at all in myself that I need to look for motives to reassure the lovable Sophie concerning my inconstancy. It is her charms and her merit that alone provide me with them; what does it matter in what climes she lives, her reign will always be everywhere people have eyes and hearts.

FRÉDÉRIC.

Do you hear, sister; that means that if he ever becomes unfaithful, you will find in his country everything necessary to compensate yourself for it.

SOPHIE.

Your time will be better employed pleading his case to my father than interpreting his feelings to me.

GOTERNIZ.

You see, Mr. Maker, that they have all joined together against you. We are dealing with a stronger party. Wouldn't we be doing better to give way gracefully?

MAKER.

What does that mean? Is this the way one breaks one's word to a man like me?

FRÉDÉRIC.

Yes; that's the preferred way to do it.

GOTERNIZ.

Obtain my daughter's consent, I do not retract mine at all: but I did not promise you to constrain her. Moreover, to tell you the truth, I no longer see the same attractiveness for either you or her in this marriage. On the score of Dorante you have conceived grounds for suspicion that could become a source of reciprocal bitterness between the two of you. It is too difficult to live peacefully with a woman whose heart one suspects of being engaged elsewhere.

MAKER.

Yess! That's the way you want to put it? Oh, by God, I will make you see that you can't make fun of people that way! I am going right away to bring a complaint against him and against you. We will give these fine gentlemen a little lesson about coming to snatch away our mistresses in our own country; and if I can avenge myself no other way, I will at least have the pleasure of saying disparaging things everywhere about you, and about the French.

LAST SCENE.
GOTERNIZ, DORANTE, FRÉDÉRIC, SOPHIE.

GOTERNIZ.

Let's let him blow off steam with empty muttering. By uniting Sophie to Dorante I satisfy paternal tenderness and gratitude at the same time. With such justifiable feelings I do not fear anyone's criticism.

DORANTE.

Ah! Sir! What raptures! . . .

FRÉDÉRIC.

Father, the most important thing is left for us to do. It is a question of obtaining my sister's consent, and I see great difficulties there. To marry Dorante and to go to France! Sophie will never make up her mind to do that.

GOTERNIZ.

What then! Dorante wouldn't be to her taste? In this case, I very much suspect her of having changed it.

FRÉDÉRIC.

Don't you see the threats she is making against me for having taken Mister Jean Matthiaz Maker away from her.

GOTERNIZ.

She does not know how lovable Frenchmen are.

FRÉDÉRIC.

No, but she knows that Frenchwomen are even more so, and that is what frightens her.

SOPHIE.

Not at all, for I will try to become so along with them, and as long as I please Dorante I will consider myself the most glorious of all women.

DORANTE.

Ah! You will be so eternally. Fair Sophie! For me you are the prize of what is most estimable among men. It is to the Virtue of my Father,

to the merit of my nation, and to the glory of my King that I owe the happiness that I am going to enjoy with you; one cannot be happy under finer auspices.

END.

The Reckless Pledge

Comedy

Foreword.

Nothing is more insipid than this piece. Nevertheless I have maintained some attachment to it because of the gaiety of the third act and the ease with which it was written in three days, thanks to the tranquillity and contentment of mind in which I was living at that time without understanding the art of writing and without any pretension. If I made the General Edition myself I hope I would have enough reason to cut this scribbling out of it; if not, I leave to those I will have burdened with this undertaking the effort of judging what is suitable either to my memory or to the present taste of the public.

ACTORS

DORANTE, VALÉRE } Friends
ISABELLE, A widow
ELIANTE, Isabelle's cousin
LISETTE, Isabelle's maid
CARLIN, Dorante's valet
A NOTARY
A LACKEY

The setting is in Isabelle's Château

ACT I

SCENE I
ISABELLE, ELIANTE

ISABELLE.
At last then hymen is going to tighten such gentle bonds:
Upon his return Valére must be your Spouse.
You will be happy. Ah! My dear Eliante!

ELIANTE.
You sigh? Very well, if the example tempts you,
Dorante adores you and you see it very well.
Why trouble your heart and his this way?
For, you love him a little: at least I suspect so.

ISABELLE.
No, hymen will no longer have any rights over my person,
Cousin, a first choice succeeded too badly for me.

ELIANTE.
Take your revenge by making this one.

ISABELLE.
I wish to follow the Law that I prescribed for myself;
Or at least . . . For Dorante wished to seduce me,
To take possession of my heart under the feigned name of friend.
Would I then be the dupe of a deceiver this way
Who, by his very success, would be all the more guilty?
And who is too much so, perhaps . . .

ELIANTE.
Thus he can be forgiven.

ISABELLE.
Not at all; he will not have deceived me with impunity.
He is coming. Let's keep our distance for a moment, my Cousin.
He is not so close to his goal as he thinks,
And I want to contemplate my vengeance at leisure.

SCENE II.

DORANTE.
She still avoids me! What does this mean?
When will I be enlightened about the state of her heart?
Let us risk speaking. . . . Her mood frightens me . . .
Carlin knows her new maid very well;
I want . . .

(He notices Carlin.)

Carlin?

SCENE III.
CARLIN, DORANTE.

CARLIN.
Sir?

DORANTE.
Have you seen that château?

CARLIN.
Yes for quite a while.

DORANTE.
What do you say about it?

CARLIN.
It is fine.

DORANTE.
But in addition?

CARLIN.
Fine, very fine, finer than anything can be.
By the Devil!

DORANTE.
And if I soon were to become its Master
Would that please you?

CARLIN.

It depends; if it stays furnished for us,
An abundant kitchen, and well-stocked Cellar.
For your amusements, Isabelle, Eliante,
For those of Master Carlin, Lisette the Maid:
But, yes, it would please me.

DORANTE.

You are not disgusted.
Well then, rejoice, for it is . . .

CARLIN.

Purchased?

DORANTE.
No, but soon won.

CARLIN.

Good: By what adventure:
Isabelle is of neither age nor countenance
To lose her châteaux with four throws of dice.

DORANTE.
It is ours, I tell you, and everything is settled
Already in my mind.

CARLIN.

The plague! The fine encroachment!
Resolved by you? It's a done deal;
Henceforth we cannot fail to have the Château.

DORANTE.
Think about helping me instead of making sport.

CARLIN.
Oh! Sir! I do not have such a lively head;
And I have such slowness in the imaginative faculty
That my boorish mind, always perplexed,
Can never enjoy goods that I don't have.
I would be a Croesus without that clumsiness.

DORANTE.
Do you know, my tender friend, that with your kindness
You could very well, as prize for your morality,
Attract some reality on your back?

CARLIN.
Ah! I no longer have any desire to moralize.
How they treat you, alas! Poor Philosophy!
There, you can speak; I'll listen without breathing a word.

DORANTE.
Then learn a secret that must be concealed from everyone,
At least if you can.

CARLIN.
Nothing is easier for me.

DORANTE.
May God wish it! In this case, you can be useful to me.

CARLIN.
Let's see.

DORANTE.
I love Isabelle.

CARLIN.
Oh! What a secret! My faith
I knew it without you.

DORANTE.
Who told you?

CARLIN.
You did.

DORANTE.
I?

CARLIN.
Yes, you: you conduct your intrigues of Love
With so much mystery, that in trying to keep them secret,

Your mysterious airs, all your goings and comings
Soon inform the town and suburbs about them.
Let's move on. Does the Fair One respond to your love?

DORANTE.
Doubtless.

CARLIN.
You believe Isabelle loves you?
What proof do you have of the success of your ardor?

DORANTE.
Mr. Carlin, you are rather curious!

CARLIN.
Oh! That tone, my faith, feels its good fortune;
But too much confidence has caused more than one miss,
You know it very well.

DORANTE.
I am sure of my fact.
Isabelle flees me everywhere.

CARLIN.
But indeed
That is a constant proof of her tender ardor!

DORANTE.
Listen to the end. That charming Widow
Declared unalterably at the end of her mourning
That her heart renounced Love forever.
Almost from that moment my heart was touched by it;
I saw her, I loved her; but always attached
To the vow she had made, I felt that I must
Carefully handle her mind with a skilful detour.
I feigned much antipathy for marriage,
And guiding my speeches by her Philosophy,
Under the peaceful name of a sweet friendship,
I was given a share in her amusements.

CARLIN.
Plague! That goes well. By amusing the Fair Ones
You arrive at the serious. One must laugh with them;
What one does while laughing is so much gained.

DORANTE.
More than a year has passed in this handling.
You might well suspect that after a whole year
One is more familiar than after a day,
And a thousand amiable games have occurred between friends
That one would not have allowed with a Stranger.
Now for some time I have noticed that Isabelle
Is behaving in a new way with me.
Her cousin still receives me with the same eye;
But under the pretended air of a favorable greeting
Isabelle treats me with so much reserve
That, either secretly foreseeing her defeat
She wants to avoid admitting it to me,
Or she is receiving the ardor of another Lover.

CARLIN.
Ah! Who do you think could please her here?
The only ones who enter this castle are you and Valére
Who, as a bound slave toward the cousin,
Is soon going to see his ardor crowned by hymen.

DORANTE.
Then, perceiving no Rival to fear,
Shouldn't I judge that, wanting to constrain herself,
Today Isabelle seeks to fool me
About the progress of an ardor she wants to disguise?
But however she might try to hide her burning
My heart has penetrated her Soul's secret;
Her eyes have shot charming arrows toward mine,
Fortunate omens of Lovers' happiness.
I am loved, I tell you, a requital full of charms
Finally compensates for my sighs, my raptures, and my tears.

CARLIN.
Spare me these exclamations;
There are other occasions

When that accomplishes marvels. Now as to our business
I don't see yet what my ministrations
Can do in your favor if you are loved;
What more do you need?

DORANTE.
Her admission of my happiness,
In this Castle there must . . . But I see Lisette.
Go wait for me at home. Above all speak discreetly.

CARLIN.
Sir, you are offending the rights of my profession.
One must choose one's world and then have faith in it.

DORANTE.
Ah! I forgot. . . .
(Calling him back.)
Carlin? I have received from Valére
A Letter of notice that for a certain business
That he does not explain, he is arriving today;
If he comes, rush here to inform me of it right away.

SCENE IV.
DORANTE, LISETTE.

DORANTE.
Ah! beautiful Child it is you! Good day my Lisette.
How go the Gallants! From your coquettish manner
One could warrant at least two or three:
The greater their number, the better the selection.

LISETTE.
Sir, you give me a petty character
But truly very pretty!

DORANTE.
Now, now! Don't be angry.
Enough with such barbs, Lisette, by your faith,
Can you keep People from being in Love with you?

LISETTE.
Very well. You reel off flowery words wonderfully
And your gallant speeches enchant the ears.
But believe me after all.

DORANTE.
To be sure! You charm me.
(Pretending to want to embrace her.)
I love to take you at your word.

LISETTE.
Calm down, Sir!

DORANTE.
You are laughing
And I want to laugh too.

LISETTE.
I see it. A plague upon it.
How free you are in interpreting me, Sir!
I understand myself differently, and know that with us
This seductive jargon of Gentlemen like you
Shows where the speech is directed in a roundabout way.

DORANTE.
What! You would think then that smitten by your Mistress . . .

LISETTE.
I? I think nothing, but if you believe me
You will direct your too ill-compensated ardor elsewhere.

DORANTE, *in a lively manner.*
Ah! I had foreseen it! The ingrate has seen my passion,
And she has read in my Soul in order to overpower me.

LISETTE.
Who told you that?

DORANTE.
Who told me! You did.

LISETTE.
I? I don't think so.

DORANTE.
What?

LISETTE.
No, by my faith.

DORANTE.
And this ill-compensated ardor, is it a dream? Is it a tale?

LISETTE.
The Devil! Since the ardor climbs first to your Brain!
I won't rub myself against it any more.

DORANTE.
Ah! Deign to enlighten me.
What pleasure can you take in making me suffer?

LISETTE.
And are you for so long a time making a mystery to me
Of a secret with which I should be entrusted?
I wanted to punish you with a little worry.
Up to now Isabelle hasn't noticed anything.
(Aside.)
That is a lie.
(Aloud.)
But beware lest she suspect you;
For I doubt that her heart will pardon you in that event.
You cannot imagine how far her pride extends.

DORANTE.
Behold me fallen back into my quandary.

LISETTE.
She is coming. Try to read in her soul
And above all hide your passion with care,
For you are lost if you let her see it.

DORANTE.
Alas! Such slowness leads me to despair.

SCENE V.
ISABELLE, DORANTE, LISETTE.

ISABELLE.
Ah! Dorante, hello. What! You two tête-à-tête!
Well then! You are paying court to Lisette?
She is truly nice and a good conversationalist.

DORANTE.
Madame, it is enough for me that she belongs to you.
To seek the happiness of pleasing her in everything.

ISABELLE.
If that is your object, nothing is left for you to do,
For Lisette attends to all my feelings.

DORANTE.
Ah! Madame! . . .

ISABELLE.
Oh! above all, let's leave compliments aside
And let's leave this vulgar language to Lovers.
Sincere friendship has always disdained
The insipid and vain aid of its cold display:
One does not love enough when one is always saying one does.

DORANTE.
Ah! at least once, the one who can say it is happy.

LISETTE, *softly.*
Be quiet then, you jabberer.

ISABELLE.
I would dare to predict
That, based on the touching tone with which you express yourself,
You will soon love if you do not love already.

DORANTE.
I, Madame?

ISABELLE.
Yes, you.

DORANTE.
Doubtless you are jesting with me.

LISETTE, *aside.*
Oh! My faith! this time my man has been routed.

ISABELLE.
I believe I read the symptoms of love in your eyes.

DORANTE.
Madame, in truth . . .
(Loudly, to Lisette, with affectation.)
To pay her my Court
Must I admit it?

LISETTE, *softly in a lively manner.*
Watch out for . . .

DORANTE.
No truly,
Madame, it displeases me very much to contradict you.

ISABELLE.
On this positive tone, I have nothing more to see:
You would not wish, I believe, to fool me.

DORANTE.
I would rather die than deceive you.

LISETTE, *softly.*
By my faith he lies extremely well; I am quite satisfied.

ISABELLE.
Well then, your heart which no object tempts
Has disdained them all and up to today
Has not met any at all worthy of it.

DORANTE, *aside.*
Heavens! has such a predicament ever been seen!

LISETTE.
Madame, out of pure politeness he dares not
Give his approval to this speech;
But I know that love is his aversion.

(Softly, to Dorante.)

Some heart is needed here.

ISABELLE.

Very well, I am charmed by it.
Now our friendship is confirmed forever
At least, if not feeling any inclination for love,
You wish to renounce it for me forever.

LISETTE.
There is nothing he will not do to please you, Madame.

ISABELLE.
You answer for him? That is ungracious.

DORANTE.
Alas! I approve all of it; state what you will.
All your orders will be executed by me.

ISABELLE.
These are not at all laws that I impose, Dorante,
And if you are loath to do what I propose
From this day forth we can part as good friends.

DORANTE.
Ah! My taste will always be subject to your wishes!

ISABELLE.
You are accommodating; I want to be indulgent,
And to give you an evident proof of this
I declare at present that for a single day, one object
Must limit the vow that you have made here.
For this single day leave your heart in defense;
Avoid even the appearance of love,
Toward a single object that I will name to you;

Resist today, tomorrow I will make you
A gift . . .

DORANTE, *in a lively manner.*
Of my choice?

ISABELLE.
So be it, you must be satisfied;
And I shall leave you to settle your wages.
I exclude nothing but the laws of honor.
I would like the prize to be worthy of the victor.

DORANTE.
Gods! What slight labors for such a recompense!

ISABELLE.
Yes, but if prudence fails you for one moment,
The slightest act of love, a sigh, a glance,
A shaft of jealousy on your part
Instantly deprives you of the right I am leaving you:
I shall punish myself for your own weakness.
By seeing you then for the last time.
Such are the immutable Laws of the wager.

DORANTE.
Ah! May you spare me mortal alarms!
But what then at last is that object full of charms
Whose attractions for me are so much to be dreaded?

ISABELLE.
Your heart will easily be able to rebuff them;
Fear nothing.

DORANTE.
And it is?

ISABELLE.
It is I.

DORANTE.
You?

ISABELLE.

Yes, I myself.

DORANTE.
What am I hearing?

ISABELLE.

Whence comes to you this extreme surprise?
If the combat was less easy
The price would not be worth what it would have cost.

LISETTE.
But look at him; his face is worth a picture!

DORANTE, *aside.*
No; it beats me. But I must constrain myself.
Let's try to compose my senses right now.
My heart has struggled against itself for too long;
A little respite is needed for this excess of pain.
The cruel one has seen too well the penchant that sweeps me away,
And by dint of thinking about it, I cannot foresee
Whether she wants to punish, or reward me for it.

SCENE VI.
ISABELLE, LISETTE.

LISETTE.
This poor Boy's Fate touches my Soul.
You take too much pleasure mistreating his passion.
And you punish him for his fidelity.

ISABELLE.
Go on, Lisette, he has gotten nothing that he did not well deserve.
What! He was seducing me for such a long time?
He was leading me into his skillful traps?
Under the name of sweet friendship, he would have . . .

LISETTE.
Made Love prosper?

ISABELLE.
And I would have pitied him?
In our caprices these deceivers must find
The just punishment for all their artifices.
As long as they are Lovers, they depend on us:
Their turn comes only too much as soon as they are Husbands!

LISETTE.
They are, it is very true, the most arrant hypocrites!
They know how to play the humble servant:
And then, beware the claws; oh! Let us revenge ourselves
On them in advance.

ISABELLE, *to herself.*
Yes, the turnabout is fortuitous.
(To Lisette.)
I am contemplating a rather good bit for Dorante
In which we will need all your skill.
Valére is about to return from Paris?

LISETTE.
He arrives today, Dorante has been informed of it.

ISABELLE.
So much the better, that serves my plan wonderfully.

LISETTE.
Now explain this unprecedented ruse to us then.

ISABELLE.
United with the same love, Valére and my Cousin
Perhaps are to be married from this day forth.
I want to make her the confidante of my scheme.

LISETTE.
What will you do, alas, with poor Eliante?
She will spoil everything. Have you forgotten
That she is goodness itself, and that her Mind,
Hardly nimble, is not made for the slightest artifice,
And her Heart even less for the slightest malice?

ISABELLE.
You speak extremely well, in truth; but yet my plan
Would require . . . wait. . . . but yes; here it is.
We can easily fool her;
That will only be better for our stratagem.

LISETTE.
But if, at last Dorante, swept away by love,
Falls into some trap into which you cast him,
At least you won't push jesting
Farther than a joke allows?

ISABELLE.
What do you call, farther? These are games,
But whose result must be serious.
If Dorante is the victor and if Dorante loves me,
Let him ask for my hand, he will have it the very moment.
But if his weak heart cannot execute
The Law he allowed my mouth to dictate,
If his stupidity drags him a little too far,
An eternal farewell will become the penalty
With which I shall avenge myself for his seduction,
And with which I shall punish his indiscretion.

LISETTE.
But if he commits only a slight fault
For which even the slightest penalty is too severe?

ISABELLE.
First, we shall amuse ourselves at his expense,
Then, afterward we shall see what we shall do.

ACT II.

SCENE I.
ISABELLE, LISETTE.

LISETTE.
Yes, Madame, everything has succeeded marvelously.
Eliante was all ears as she listened,

And based on our own pretenses, in her vain terror
I think we are putting new heart into the Devil.

ISABELLE.
She completely believes that I am interested in Valére?

LISETTE.
And what do you see out of the ordinary in that?
That a friend in secret takes possession of the Lover?
By my Lady! let she who can, ensnare.

ISABELLE.
Ah! To be sure
These measures accord ill with my character.
Moreover . . .

LISETTE.
You do not love the Lover who can please her,
And virtue tells you to leave her what belongs to her.
Ah! How generous one is when it costs nothing!

ISABELLE.
No, if I did love him I would not be capable . . .

LISETTE.
But at bottom do you believe yourself much less guilty?

ISABELLE.
I admit, the turn is a mischievous one.

LISETTE.
Very mischievous.

ISABELLE.
But . . .

LISETTE.
Its costs have been paid, you must see it through,
Isn't it so?

ISABELLE.
Yes, I am going to write the fake Letter.
To Valére pretending to want to reassure him,

By and by you will try, but very skillfully,
To make it arrive in Dorante's hands.

LISETTE.

Oh! Truly!
Carlin is such a sap that . . .

ISABELLE.

There he is.
Let's go back, He comes conveniently for our stratagem.

SCENE II.

CARLIN.
Valére has arrived, and I, I instantly hasten;
And Dorante is waiting for me.
Where the Devil to look for him? Such fine things he owes me!
They say that they have given wings to the God Mercury:
In fact you need them to serve a Lover,
Unless he feeds his people lightly enough
To compensate for it. What a cursed life
To be subject to so many whims!
Really, such masters are funny subjects!
By my faith, they take their People for their Valets!

SCENE III.
ELIANTE, CARLIN.

ELIANTE.
Heavens! What did I just hear and who will believe it?
Has such a black perfidy ever been invented?

CARLIN.
Eliante appears; her eyes are in tears!
What Devil caused them?

ELIANTE.

From such evil deeds
Who could recognize Isabelle and Valére?

CARLIN.
This certainly conceals some new mystery.

ELIANTE.
Ah! Carlin, how aptly I meet you here!

CARLIN.
And I, very aptly find you here too,
Madame, if I can show my zeal for you.

ELIANTE.
Run to call Dorante and tell him that Isabelle,
Lisette and his Friend all three are betraying us.

CARLIN.
I am looking for him myself, and I have already twice
Rushed here to inform him
That Valére has stopped at the Lodge to wait for him.

ELIANTE.
Valére? Ah! The faithless one! He disdains my heart,
He is marrying Isabelle, and his guilty ardor,
Tearing his Mistress from his friend Dorante,
Insults honor and tenderness at the same time.

CARLIN.
But from whom do you have such a bizarre fact?
We must distrust the reports made to us.

ELIANTE.
I have only too certain proof of my unhappiness.
By pure chance I was in the next room;
Isabelle and Lisette were arranging their plot.
Through the partition, up to the very last word
I heard it all. . . .

CARLIN.
But, that is enough to dumbfound me!
I have nothing to answer to that proof.
Nevertheless, what can I do to serve you?

ELIANTE.
In a little while Lisette must surely leave
To carry a Letter to Valére herself

That Isabelle soon must put into her hands.
Try to catch her by surprise, open it, carry it
To Dorante on the spot; from that he will be able to see
The criminal thread of their whole black plot;
Let him try to forestall that cruel insult,
My outrage is his.

CARLIN.

Madame, the suffering
That I feel for you in the bottom of my heart . . .
Sets fire to such anger in my soul . . .
That my mind cannot . . . if I had Valére. . . .
Enough, I am saying nothing. . . . But, either we shall not be able
To serve you Madame . . . or we shall serve you.

ELIANTE.

You may promise yourself everything from my just recompense.
Lisette is going to come: remember the Letter.
A different way of acting would be more generous;
But against deceivers one can act as they do.
For lack of any other way to make it known
One must punish a traitor by betraying him.

SCENE IV.

CARLIN.

Remember! It is fine to say that: but to execute
The theft she requests one must meditate.
Lisette is no fool, and the Devil take me
If one can take anything she has except in some good way.
I see nothing but trouble in it. Yet let's consider
Whether it is completely impossible. . . . The case is important;
But here it's a question of not committing ourselves too much,
For my back. . . . It's Lisette and I perceive the Letter:
Eliante, by my faith, is not at all mistaken.

SCENE V.

CARLIN, LISETTE, *with a Letter at her Bosom.*

LISETTE, *aside.*

There is my rascal on the lookout already; all is well.

CARLIN, *aside.*
Let's risk the attempt.
(Aloud.)
And how goes it, Lisette?

LISETTE.
I didn't see you; one would say that someone
Put you there on sentry to rob People.

CARLIN.
But, I would prefer to plunder Passersby
Who look like you.

LISETTE.
As unformidable?

CARLIN.
No, People who would be as worth stealing from as you.

LISETTE.
What would you steal, poor Child, I have nothing?

CARLIN.
With such nothings Carlin can do very well.
For example, at first, I would try to take . . .
Trying to snatch the Letter.

LISETTE.
Very good, but with me seeking to defend myself,
You would take nothing; at least for the moment.
She puts the Letter in her apron pocket on Carlin's side.

CARLIN.
I would then have to set about it differently.
What is that Letter? Where are you going to put it then?

LISETTE, *pretending to be embarrassed.*
That Letter, Carlin? Ah! But it is a Letter . . .
That I am putting in my pocket.

CARLIN.

Oh! Truly! I see it.
But would you like to tell me to whom . . .

Again he tries to take the Letter.

LISETTE, *putting the Letter in the other pocket opposite Carlin.*

Already twice
You have tried to take it by a ruse.
I would very much like to know . . .

CARLIN.

Please excuse me;
I ought not to take any share of your secrets.
I only wanted to know if by chance
That Letter isn't for Valére or Dorante.

LISETTE.
And if it was for them . . .

CARLIN.

To begin with, I present myself,
As I would do in any other case,
To carry it myself and save you some steps.

LISETTE.
It is for someone else.

CARLIN.

You are lying; let's see the Letter.

LISETTE.
And if in giving it to you, I made you promise
Not to show it, would you keep it?

CARLIN.
Yes, Lisette by my honor, I swear it at your knees.

LISETTE.
You are teaching me how I will have to behave:
I was ordered not to show it at all,
I promised by my honor.

CARLIN.

Oh! That's different:
Your honor and mine are not at all alike.

LISETTE.

By my faith, Mister Carlin, I would be very angry at this:
What impertinence!

CARLIN.

Ah! You are holding back!
I know what your motive is now.
Your mind would be less inventive in dodges
If the Letter touched someone other than yourself;
A treacherous Rival is the object of the Stratagem
And for my unhappiness I have seen through it too well
From your precautions not to show it at all.

LISETTE.

It is true; from a Rival become amorous
From now on I am hardly curious about your efforts.

CARLIN, *declaiming.*

Yes, faithless one, I see that you are betraying me,
Without return for my cares, for my former labors.
When I walked with you to all the taverns,
When I helped you to fold your Cornettes,
When I took you to the fair or the Opera,
You told me our love will last forever:
But already other fires have chased from your Soul
The charming memory of your former flame.
I feel that regret is overpowering me with vapors;
Barbarous one, it is done; it is for you that I die.

LISETTE.

No, I still love you; but he falls from weakness.

(While Lisette holds him up and makes him sniff her scent bottle, Carlin steals the Letter from her.)

Why wish to hide my tenderness from him?
It is I who murders him. Ah! Quickly my scent bottle,
Sniff, sniff, my poor child.

(Aside.)

Ah! The crafty knave!

(Aloud.)

How do you feel?

CARLIN.

I am returning to life.

LISETTE.
Your death would soon have been followed by mine.

CARLIN.
Your divine liquor has completely revived me.

LISETTE, *aside.*
It is my Letter, Rogue, that has resuscitated you.

(Aloud.)

Nevertheless, I amuse myself with you for too long;
I must dream up some excuse,
And I should have already returned.
Farewell, my dear Carlin.

CARLIN.

You are going, my love?
Assure me, at least of your perseverance.

LISETTE.
What! Can you doubt my constancy at all?

(Aside.)

He thinks he has duped me, and laughs at my remarks;
With all their wit men are fools.

SCENE VI.

CARLIN.
I finally win and here is my conquest.
This isn't everything; another brainstroke is needed:
For if I take it to Dorante this way
He will return it right away without opening it,
The thing is inevitable: and nevertheless Valére
Is doing you out of Isabelle, and under my ministry
I shall see her charms, I shall see her money

Pass into other hands and my plans ruined!
The Letter must be opened. . . . Ah! Yes; but if I open it
And my theft be discovered by some misfortune,
Valére might well . . . Plague be the fool!
Who the hell will know? I, I won't say a word about it.
Perhaps Lisette will have some suspicion of me:
Well, we shall lie. . . . let's go, serve my Master,
And let's satisfy my curiosity above all.
The Wax isn't sticking at all; everything is already torn;
So much the better: closing it will be easy. . . .

(He reads while walking about.)

The Devil! Let's see this.

(He reads.)

"I am warning you with this Letter, my dear Valére, assuming that you will arrive today, as we agreed. Dorante is our dupe more than ever: he is still persuaded that you want Eliante, and I have imagined on this subject a rather pleasant stratagem to amuse us at his expense and to keep him from disturbing our marriage: I have made a sort of wager with him, through which he has pledged not to give me from now until tomorrow any sign of love or of jealousy under penalty of never seeing me again. In order to seduce him more certainly, I will load him with extravagant signs of tenderness which you must take only for what they are worth; if he fails in his pledge, he authorizes me to break with him directly, and if he observes it, he frees us from his importunities until the end of the business. Farewell; the Notary has already been summoned; everything is ready for the agreed-upon hour, and I can be with you as early as tonight.

Isabelle."

Well! A pretty style!
After such turns, one doesn't say anything unless
One has to find out whether she is a woman or a Demon.
Oh! This is something to make my Master rejoice!
Someone is coming: it is the man himself.

SCENE VII.
DORANTE, CARLIN.

DORANTE.

Where do you keep yourself, traitor?
I have been looking for you everywhere.

CARLIN.

I have been looking for you too;
Didn't you tell me to come back here?

DORANTE.
But why so long . . .

CARLIN.

Be more patient.
If you show the same petulance in everything
We shall see some fine acting.

DORANTE.

What's this you are saying?

CARLIN.
It's nothing; only to your tender Loves
You must bid farewell.

DORANTE.

What foolish news
Do you come . . .

CARLIN.

Don't get angry: I know for sure that Isabelle
Loves only you in the bottom of her heart;
But, to nourish such a sweet feeling,
See how she speaks about you to Valére.

DORANTE.
The writing, in fact, is in her hand.

(He reads the Letter.)

What do I see? Wretch! Where did you get this note?

CARLIN.
Will you suspect that I wrote it?

DORANTE.
Where did you get it, I say?

CARLIN.
From the dear maid
I took it by surprise just now at Eliante's order.

DORANTE.
Eliante's! How?

CARLIN.
She had discovered
All the treachery that Isabelle and Lisette
Arranged together, and, to inform you of it,
Ran to tell it to me in this vestibule.
The poor Child was crying.

DORANTE.
Ah! I am overwhelmed!
Blind man that I was! How could I not have seen
Their understanding in their affected airs?
A heart without mistrust is easily abused.
They were laughing at my simplicity!

CARLIN.
As for me, I had been suspecting it for a long time.
One found them together continuously.

DORANTE.
It seems to me that they saw each other very little in front of me.

CARLIN.
Yes, that was precisely to hide their game better:
But their glances . . .

DORANTE.
No; they glanced at each other very little
Out of affectation.

CARLIN.
To be sure! That's it.

DORANTE.
Having just found Valére at my place,
I should have seen, from his tone in speaking about their bonds,

How artfully he was playing Eliante's lover,
That the ingrate was only seeking to put me off the scent.

CARLIN.
Was credulity ever more strange?
But what use is regret, and what should you do after all?

DORANTE.
Nothing; I wish only to know if they dare
To carry their craven stratagem all the way.

CARLIN.
What! You intend to be the witness yourself, then. . . .

DORANTE.
I want to see Isabelle, and pretending not to know
The reward that she has prepared for my tenderness,
In order to detest her better I intend to constrain myself
And learn the art of pretense from her own example.
You, go prepare everything in order to leave tonight.

CARLIN, *goes and comes back.*
Perhaps . . .

DORANTE.
What?

CARLIN.
I'm going.

DORANTE.
I'm in despair.
She is coming. Let's disguise my rage from her eyes.
How charming she is! Alas! How can it happen
That such a black spirit animates such attractiveness?

SCENE VIII.
ISABELLE, DORANTE.

ISABELLE.
Dorante, henceforth it is no longer time to affect
A useless secret about my true feelings.

When the thing touches us one sees the least skillful
Rarely abandon herself to the error she feigns.
I claim to act more frankly with you.
I love you, Dorante, and my sincere passion,
Leaving these deceitful appearances of austere wisdom
Whose display serves ill to disguise the heart,
Wants very much to unveil its ardor to your gaze.
After having vaunted indifference for a long time,
After having suffered a year of violence,
You feel only too much that it costs more than a little
When one sees oneself reduced to making such an admission.

DORANTE.
It must be granted; I did not have the audacity
To expect this excess of favor.
This admission confounds me and I cannot doubt
How much it must have cost you to make it.

ISABELLE.
Your discretion, your ardor, your constancy
Did not deserve any less than this recompense;
The most tender love, tested love must
Be given the hope of which I have deprived it.
The more ardor you had, the more, fearing my rage,
You devoted yourself to not displeasing me;
And only my precedent could have dispensed you
From hiding from me a fire that must have offended me.
But if all my flame bursts forth to your gaze
Perhaps I am flattering myself about your true feelings,
And I do not see them declaring themselves here at all
In the way I could have hoped after this admission.

DORANTE.
Madame, forgive the agitation that disturbs me,
My happiness is too great to believe it without difficulty.
When I ponder what prize you have destined for me
I feel astonished by your rare kindness.
But the less right I have to claim this kindness,
The more you ought to expect the return only too much due to you.
Believe, under these appearances of tranquillity,
That the bottom of my heart is no less agitated.

ISABELLE.
No, I do not find your manner at all tranquil.
But it seems to announce torrents of bile rather
Than transports of love: nevertheless I do not believe
That my speech contained anything insulting to you,
And, without flattering myself too much, others in your place
Might have received it with a little better grace.

DORANTE.
Others, in fact, it might have suited better.
With as much taste, one has better eyes,
And doubtless I do not find in my merit
Anything to justify your behavior here:
But, I see that you wish to joke with me;
It is up to me, Madame, to join in with it.

ISABELLE.
Dorante, that is pushing modesty very far:
This does not have very much the air of a joke,
Declaring our passion costs us enough
Not to make a game of such admissions.
But, I believe I penetrate the secret of your Soul;
You fear that, seeking to fool your ardor
I want to abuse the challenge just made
To seek to find you in default today.
I do not hide from you that it appears strange to me
That with so much wit you are led so far astray:
Do you think that from the fires that light up our attractions
We fear indiscreet outbursts so much,
And that a love ardent to the point of extravagance
Doesn't flatter us better than excessive prudence?
Believe, if your fate depended on the wager,
That you would be punished by winning it.

DORANTE.
Madame, you play that Comedy very well;
Your talent astonishes me, I even envy it,
And to know how to answer such sweet speeches
I would like to excel in that art as you do;
But, from wanting to push the jesting too far,
In the end I might lapse from my character
And taking, perhaps, too serious a tone . . .

ISABELLE.
As to joking he would do it only too well.
Seriously, from this sally I do not know from where
Your mind has pulled out this grotesque outburst.
I would be very amused by it some other time.
I do not want to bother you here any longer.
If you are taking this tone out of pure obligingness
You could harmonize it with politeness:
If your disdain for me wishes to show itself,
I must see how to console myself for it.

DORANTE, *in a rage.*
Ah! per . . .

ISABELLE, *interrupting him sharply.*
What?

DORANTE, *making an effort to calm himself.*
I am silent.

ISABELLE, *aside.*
Out of fear of carelessness.
Let us go to keep watch over his rage in secret.
I see all his love in his outbursts. . . .
In the end I fear I shall love him in my turn.
She leaves making a polite but mocking bow to Dorante.

SCENE IX.

DORANTE.
Have I restrained myself for long enough in her presence?
Have I shown enough patience with her?
Have I observed her perfidious baseness enough?
Have I been stabbed enough by her false blandishments?
Blandishments full of gall, bitterness, and tears,
Great Gods! what charms you might have had for my Heart
If her mouth, speaking sincerely,
Had not betrayed the truth at the bottom of her heart!
I have endured too much from her, I must confound her;
In the end what could she dare to answer to this Letter?
I must humiliate her a bit in my eyes;
I must . . . but rather, let's consider forgetting her.

Fly, distance ourselves from this fatal abode,
Let's succeed in stifling a fire that I detest,
But let's not leave until after having obtained satisfaction
From the perfidious Valére and his treachery.

ACT III.

SCENE I.
LISETTE, DORANTE, VALÉRE.

LISETTE.
How ardently angry both of you are!
Without me, you would make a very fine mess!
Behold my good friends so prompt to get involved:
Often they are even more prompt at cutting each other's throat.

DORANTE.
I am wrong, my dear Valére, and ask your pardon:
But could I have foreseen such a ruse?
How easy to dupe is a heart very much in love!
Alas, it didn't require that much to deceive me.

VALÉRE.
Friend, I am charmed by the goodness of your ardor.
The one that penetrates my soul wanted
To find the same feelings in your heart
And to see us both happy at the same time.

LISETTE, *to Valére.*
You can speak about it completely at your leisure;
But, if it does not displease him, Mister Dorante must
Do us the honor of taking his leave.

DORANTE.
What! Do you consider . . .

LISETTE.
You are the one who has not considered
The Law that Isabelle prescribed to you today.
At bottom, for a trifle you can fight
With the people you believe she wants to marry:

But Isabelle is the sort of woman to take offense at it.
She will, out of pride, put it into her imagination,
That such a combat was performed out of pure jealousy;
And, based on such exploits, I leave it to you to judge
What reward she should grant your laurels?

DORANTE.
Lisette, ah! my Child, would you be capable
Of betraying my love by making me guilty?
Your Mistress relies on your faith for everything;
If you want to save me, it depends on you.

LISETTE.
Not at all; I wish to tell her about your brilliant exploits
In order to pay my court to you.

DORANTE.
Alas! for my weakness
Show some pity.

LISETTE.
Very noble Knight,
Never does a Paladin stoop to beg:
Kill People first, that is the right way.

VALÉRE.
Can you coldly watch how he despairs,
Lisette? Ah! his suffering should have softened you.

LISETTE.
If I said a word to him, this word could sharpen it,
And perhaps he will draw his sword against me.

DORANTE.
I had counted on you, my expectation has been deceived;
I have nothing left to do but die.

LISETTE.
Oh! the rare secret!
But it is from bygone days, I miss it very much,
It was a fine pretext.

VALÉRE.

Ah! my poor Lisette!
Leave aside the useless evasion:
Serve us if you can, at least if you want to,
And count on our hearts paying for your efforts.

DORANTE.

If you fulfill my ardor's hope
Dispose of my goods, dispose of my life;
Begin with this ring. . . .

LISETTE, *taking the ring.*

What for?
I claim to serve you out of generosity.
I want to protect you with regard to my mistress;
In the end she must take a share of your tenderness,
And here is my plan. Foreseeing your fight,
She had just now sent me to you
To prevent the harm and bring back Valére
So that he couldn't clarify the mystery to you:
If I could not[1] otherwise ward off everything
She had charged me with telling you everything.
Thus that is what I did, when you wanted to fight,
And I had to, Sir, for you to keep your temper.
But, in addition, I was supposed to observe carefully
The gestures, words, and deeds I witnessed,
To see if you were faithful to the wager.
Now, if I kept myself to the pure truth about that
You feel very well, I believe, that your ardors are finished:
Thus I must lie, but to fool her better
A new idea comes into my mind.

DORANTE.

What is it? . . .

VALÉRE.

Tell us a little . . .

LISETTE.

I am persuaded. . . .
No. . . . if . . . if done . . . I believe . . . my faith, I don't know.

DORANTE.
Ye gods!

LISETTE.
But what good are so many superfluous efforts?
The idea is very simple; listen well, Dorante:
Based on what I'm going to say, soon becoming impatient
Isabelle will have you called home;
Come; but do it as if I had been able to conceal
The plan she is hatching for you today,
You will come on the footing of a simple visit,
Coldly approving everything she says,
Contradicting nothing she wants.
This evening a fake contract for her and for Valére
Will be proposed in order to make you angry;
Sign it offhandedly; you can be sure
Of seeing a blank for the name of the betrothed everywhere in it.
If you play your little part well
Isabelle, obliged to keep her word,
Will concede the wager, perhaps this very evening,
And the reward, by the Law, remains in your power.

DORANTE.
Gods! What flattering hope replaces my suffering!
But aren't you taking advantage of my credulous hope?
Can I count on you?

LISETTE.
How sweet your compliment!
Is this how you pay me for my kindness for you?

VALÉRE.
This is nothing to get upset about!
Think about accomplishing your helpful plan well,
And far from getting irritated against this poor Lover,
Know how much he is tormented by his terrors.
But, I am burning with ardor to see Eliante again,
Can't I go in? My impatient soul . . .

LISETTE.
How lively Lovers are! Yes, come with me.

(To Dorante.)

You, trust in your happiness, by my faith,
And go home to wait for news.

SCENE II.

DORANTE.
Will I see so many cruel pains end?
I could see my love crowned at last!
Gods! Could I be destined to so many pleasures?
I feel that dangers have aroused my ardor.
It burned my soul with less fury
When, out of too much vanity, I imagined
I was already grasping the reward I had claimed.
Someone is coming. Let's avoid being discovered.
I must not appear before the prescribed time.
Alas! My weak heart cannot be reassured,
And I fear even more than I dare to hope.

SCENE III.
ELIANTE, VALÉRE.

ELIANTE.
Yes Valére, I have already been informed of everything.
They very skillfully seduced me
By means of a conversation devised between them,
And I heard too much without suspecting it.

VALÉRE.
Ah! What, fair Eliante, how could you have believed
That Valére, to such a degree, enemy of his glory,
Above all of his happiness, looked in other bonds
For the reward with which your kindness had gratified his wishes?
Ah! How poorly you judged my tenderness!

ELIANTE.
I admit all my weakness to you.
But how much have I paid for too much credulity!
How could you not have seen what it cost me!
In the end Isabelle, softened by my tears,
Calmed my jealousy by a frank admission:

But that admission, nevertheless, by demanding of me
That I promise that, about such a secret,
Dorante would have no indication from me.
I made this sacrifice to my love for you:
But it costs me dearly to deceive him this way.

VALÉRE.
Like you, Dorante has been informed about all this.
Keep your secret by pretending to feign.
Soon Isabelle, tired of constraining herself,
Following our plan perhaps on this very day
Will fall into her own trap and surrender to love.

SCENE IV.
ISABELLE, ELIANTE, VALÉRE, *and* LISETTE, *a little afterward.*

ISABELLE, *to herself.*
This coolness of Dorante both irritates and insults me.
Thus he loves me very little, if he does not have the courage
At least to seek a clarification!

LISETTE, *arriving.*
Dorante is going to come, Madame, in a moment.
I have had the Notary called at the same time.

ISABELLE.
But we still need Valére's help:
I believe that he will very much want to serve us today.
I have good security that makes me count on him.

VALÉRE.
If my zeal is enough, and my extreme respect,
You might well count on me, Madame.

ISABELLE.
I need a husband solely for tonight.
Would you like to be him?

ELIANTE.
Eh indeed! It will be necessary to see.
What! You need securities then, cousin,
To post bail for your husbands?

LISETTE.

Oh! Yes; because looks,
Often deceive.

ISABELLE, *to Valére.*

Well, what do you say about it?

VALÉRE.

One does not refuse, Madame, such a sweet fate;
But for too short a period . . .

ISABELLE.

It is good to tell you,
Moreover, that this is only a joke of a marriage.

LISETTE.

Dorante is here; without me, you will spoil everything.

ISABELLE.

I hope that his heart will not be able to resist
The stroke I am keeping for him.

SCENE V.

ISABELLE, DORANTE, ELIANTE, VALÉRE, LISETTE.

ISABELLE.

Ah! There you are Dorante.
I am not content with seeing you so little:
Why do you flee me? Too much presumption
Made me believe, it is true, that a little passion
Might be the cause of your cares toward me:
But must one take the thing so badly for that?
When I wished earlier by too sweet admissions
To engage your heart to unveil its ardor,
I had not thought that this was an offense
To disturb the good understanding between us;
Nevertheless, by conceited airs you have shown me
Too clearly your offensive contempt;
But if the lover disdains such a weak slavery,
At least the friend must compensate me for it,
I believe that my tenderness is not such an affront
That I should be punished for it by a rupture.

DORANTE.
I feel what I owe to your kindness, Madame,
But your wise lessons have so touched my soul,
That, to be honest with you here,
I have profited from them better than you have.

ISABELLE, *aside, to Lisette.*
Lisette, how cold he is! His tone is completely icy.

LISETTE, *aside.*
Good! It is because he is irritated; it is out of pure feigning.

ISABELLE.
Since our conversation, you will be very surprised
To learn the decision I just made.
I am going to be married.

DORANTE, *coldly.*
You married! You?

ISABELLE.
In person. Whence comes this extreme surprise?
Might I perhaps be behaving badly?

DORANTE.
Oh! No: it is very well done.
This marriage is being performed with great secrecy.

ISABELLE.
Not at all. It is based on the refusal that you made me
That I am going to marry . . . guess.

DORANTE.
Who?

ISABELLE.
Valére.

DORANTE.
Valére? Ah! My friend, I congratulate you for it.
But Eliante then?

ISABELLE.
Gives up her Lover to me.

DORANTE.
Rather! There, Madame, is a very unusual precedent.

LISETTE.
Before the marriage, yes, the fact is bizarre;
For, if it was after, ah! Then one would give him up
To be rid of him.

ISABELLE, *aside, to Lisette.*
Lisette, it appears to me.
That he is not getting stirred up at all.

LISETTE, *aside.*
He thinks we are joking:
Wait for the Contract, and you will see his face.

ISABELLE, *aside.*
Darn my caprice and my crazy games!

A LACKEY.
The Notary is here.

DORANTE.
But you are in a hurry.
The Contract as early as tonight! This is no joke.

ISABELLE.
No, without a doubt, Sir, and I even ask you,
As a friend to wish to sign it.

DORANTE.
I must always resign myself to your orders.

ISABELLE, *aside.*
If he signs, it is done, I must give it up.

SCENE VI.

THE NOTARY, *and the Actors of the preceding scene.*

THE NOTARY.
Do you require me to pronounce the Contract aloud?

VALÉRE.
No, Mr. Notary; we agree to everything
That Madame has done; it is enough that
The Contract be concluded to her taste.

ISABELLE, *looking at Dorante spitefully.*
I have no grounds for fearing
That anyone will complain about what it contains.

THE NOTARY.
Now since that is so, I am going, summarily,
In brief, succinctly, concisely,
To summarize, explain, in a laconic Style
The points articulated in this legal transaction,
And in conformity with the Copy remaining in my hands,
Thus in accordance with right and Custom is understood
First for the futures. Item, as for their families,
Great-grandparents, great-great-grandparents, Father, children, sons and daughters,
At least reputed as such, so that by the Law
Quem nuptiae monstrant it appears to attest.
Item, for their country abode and domicile
Past, present, future, as much in the Country as the Town.
Item, for all their goods, acquisitions, conquests, dowries,
Portion, mortgage, and Paraphernal goods.
Item, again, for those of their stock and line . . .

LISETTE.
Item, you will be doing us a signal favor
If of these preposterous words exhaled from your lungs
It pleased you, Sir, to summarize the summary.

VALÉRE.
Truthfully, all these details are extremely useless to us.
We believe the Contract is full of subtle conditions,
But we have no desire to see them today.

THE NOTARY.
Do you wish to proceed, approving this,
By corroborating it with your signature?

ISABELLE.
Let's sign, I wish it so, here is my signature.
To you, Valére.

ELIANTE, *aside to Isabelle.*
At least, this isn't in earnest,
You promised me Cousin?

ISABELLE.
Ah! My God, no.
Does Dorante care also to do us the favor . . .
(She presents him with the pen.)

DORANTE.
To please you, Madame, there is nothing one would not do.

ISABELLE, *aside.*
My heart is beating: I fear how all this will end.

DORANTE, *aside.*
The intended isn't filled in; all goes well up to here.

ISABELLE, *aside.*
He signs without ado . . . in the end I suspect . . .
(To Lisette.)
You are not tricking me?

LISETTE.
This is a fine thing!
It would be very funny for you to think so!

ISABELLE.
Alas! And may it please Heaven that you be tricking me.
At least I would be sure of Dorante's love.

LISETTE.
To do what about it?

ISABELLE.

Nothing. But I would be satisfied.

LISETTE, *aside.*
How both of the poor children do restrain themselves!

ISABELLE, *to Valére.*
Valére, at last hymen is going to crown our vows;
In order to tighten the knots under a happy auspices
In forming them let's perform an act of justice.
To Dorante at this moment I cede the wager.
I had believed that he loved me, but my cured mind
Perceived how much I had deceived myself.
A thousand times in secret I had accused myself
Of having made him despair by too much cruelty.
He threw himself into a rather fine trap;
But as fruit of my skill, I have left
Only the regret of seeing that his heart, without tenderness,
Braved both ruse and love alike.
Choose then, Dorante, and name on this day
The reward that you set as the winnings for the wager;
I belong to a Husband, but I am very certain
That he is too generous to dispute it with you.

VALÉRE.
You could never have counted more justly
On my obedience.

DORANTE.

I must tell it to you,
I demand . . .

ISABELLE.

Ah! Well, what?

DORANTE.

The freedom to write.

ISABELLE.
To write!

LISETTE.
He is mad then.

VALÉRE.
What are you asking?

DORANTE.
Yes; to write my name in that blank space.

ISABELLE.
Ah! You have betrayed me!

DORANTE, *at her feet.*
Ah! What! Fair Isabelle,
Won't you cease being so cruel to me?
Must I again . . .

SCENE VII.
CARLIN *boots on and a whip in his hand.*
All the actors of the preceding Scene.

CARLIN.
Sir, the Horses are all ready,
The carriage awaits us.

DORANTE.
Plague of a Valet!

CARLIN.
Sir, time is passing.

VALÉRE.
Ah! What fantasy
To bother us . . .

CARLIN.
It is six-thirty.

DORANTE.
Will you be quiet.

CARLIN.
Sir, we shall leave too late.

DORANTE.
To my taste, this is the most cursed chatterer!
Madame, pardon . . .

CARLIN.
Sir, I must be quiet,
But we have a great deal of road to cover tonight!

DORANTE.
Can the great Devil of Hell carry you away!

ELIANTE.
Lisette, explain to him . . .

LISETTE.
Fine! Does he want to listen to me?
And can anyone get in a word when Mister Carle is talking?

CARLIN, *a little quickly.*
Ah! Talk in Heaven's name! Talk before someone talks:
Talk while someone is talking: and when someone has talked
Talk again, to end without having stopped talking.

DORANTE.
You, will you stop talking, pitiless talker?
(To Isabelle.)
Can I, at last, flatter myself that a favorable inclination
Will confirm the gift that your Laws promised me?

ISABELLE.
I don't know whether you have acquired this gift fairly,
And I catch a glimpse of a knavish trick here;
But, as punishment for my stupidity
I give you my hand and leave you my Heart.[2]

DORANTE, *kissing Isabelle's hand.*
Ah! With that you add the finishing touch to my happiness.

CARLIN.
What the Devil are they doing? Am I not seeing straight?

LISETTE.
No, my dear, you are seeing very clearly,
(Laughing.)
Witness the Letter . . .

CARLIN.
Ah! Well; what are you talking about?

LISETTE.
That I had so much trouble getting stolen from me.

CARLIN.
What! It was on purpose? . . .

LISETTE.
My God, what an imbecile!
You imagined, then, that you were more skillful?

CARLIN.
I felt that I was wrong; that ruse from Hell
Ought to give you the edge on Mr. Lucifer.

LISETTE.
Never was any comparison less deserved;
I am always inclined to do good to my neighbor:
You see that by my efforts everyone here is satisfied;
They are going to get married, do you want to do the same?

CARLIN.
Done: I will take the plunge, but be a good Deviless;
Use all your skill in hiding your tricks from me;
Always make good prosper in our home;
Mock the one who lives there when I don't know about it.

LISETTE.
Often, amidst games, the heart of the wisest woman
Engages itself in sport more than she wants;
Beautiful women, learn today from this example
That one cannot play with Love without risk.

END.

[SCENE I.
BARBERRY, GRACIOUS]

BARBERRY.

No, my Sister, there is no precedent for such a bizarre taste; a love such as yours could dishonor the order of fairies.

GRACIOUS.

Wrong, my dear Barberry, the rank that we occupy forces us to descend to taste the charms of tenderness. You know how duped every one of us was in our commerce with the genies. It was completely spiritual in truth, but alas it was only that; and to find something more solid, it was very necessary to return to men.

BARBERRY.

But among these men one must have at least some selectivity.

GRACIOUS.

Why? Men are all so small that it is almost not worth the trouble to compare them with each other. The first comer is just as good as any other.

BARBERRY.

What, you would like to persuade me that this Oaf of a Harlequin with whom you have become smitten—for what I don't know—is worth as much, I do not say as a French fop, but as that enchanter, that learned Parafaragaramus who loves you so passionately.

[GRACIOUS.]

I believe there is more charlatanism than reality in his talents and I would bet that Harlequin is worth more for the use that I want to make of him.

[BARBERRY.]

But, after all, that Harlequin is nothing but a stupid, conceited fellow.

[GRACIOUS.]
What need does one have of a Husband who has so much wit?

[BARBERRY.]
A wretched Peasant.

[GRACIOUS.]
I shall make him a great lord; is that so rare, then?

[BARBERRY.]
A glutton . . .

[GRACIOUS.]
It's only that he loves good things.

[BARBERRY.]
A drunkard.

[GRACIOUS.]
Wine makes him more tender.

[BARBERRY.]
A fickle fellow, a libertine . . .

[GRACIOUS.]
I shall have the pleasure of settling him down.

[BARBERRY.]
Alas! How love bedazzles Judgment! My poor sister: you are very sick. But it is less your tenderness that I find fault with than the blindness of your choice.

[GRACIOUS.]
I want to show you that I am more reasonable than you think. But I also do not want to be the victim of human prejudices. Harlequin has not yet ever seen me; let's put his heart and his mind to the test by means of a stratagem I am imagining: if he gets out of it, very well, you will stop blaming my love and you will find it good that I marry him with his faults. If he gives way, I abandon him to you.

[BARBERRY.]
I do not know what your plan is: but I answer you that you will never make anything but a fool out of that simpleton.

[GRACIOUS.]
Let's try.

[BARBERRY.]
I'm very willing, but I am assuming that you will not trick me: for if you make an agreement with him . . .

[GRACIOUS.]
Not at all. I will act sincerely.

[BARBERRY.]
Swear.

[GRACIOUS.]
On the faith of a maid of honor.

[BARBERRY.]
Swear, swear on the faith of a fairy.

[GRACIOUS.]
I consent to it. But, as a matter of fact, here is Harlequin with another man from whom we shall have to extricate ourselves by making ourselves invisible. Come, so I can explain my ideas to you.

[SCENE II.]
HARLEQUIN, NICAISE.

HARLEQUIN.
Have we really been walking for twelve leagues?

[NICAISE.]
That's a good one, I are only a quarter of a league from our village.

[HARLEQUIN.]
I am already Devilishly tired.

[NICAISE.]
That's because you haven't gotten used to beating your soles.

[HARLEQUIN.]
Do you take me for a Bootmaker?

[NICAISE.]

By gosh, I wouldn't be doing you wrong. If I knew how to make shoes, I wouldn't be orbliged to roam the earth seeking my fortune: for as they say, everywhere are feet to be shod.

[HARLEQUIN.]

And tell me where is this fortune that we are going to seek?

[NICAISE.]

Oh By my Lady it is . . . it is . . . you don't know that, you don't, because you are a little . . . simpleton.

[HARLEQUIN.]

You are a great one, you are.

[NICAISE.]

Truly, I know how to read block letters and I Scrawl our signature as well as our master. N, i, ni; c, e ke, r, e, re: Nicaise. And by our Lady!

HARLEQ[UIN.]

You are very lucky to know all that.

NIC[AISE.]

Oh, oh, there is much mo' than that. I are so intellergent it's scary, I make all the world merry; as soon as they see me they set to laughing so much you would think it was a wedding; and when I dance, straighter than a picture, I leap better than a goat, when I sing it is worse than a Mockingbird. Oh, what a sharp one I am. Also, you should see how besotted the girls are with me; always playing tricks on me, they are.

HARLEQUIN.

Stop then, you are taking them all for yourself and I won't have any then. Oh poor little me, hi, hi, hi. *(He cries.)*

[NICAISE.]

Oh, don't you worry, I will teach you fine manners. I won't get to Paris without you being beyond comparison just about as much as I are.

[HARLEQUIN.]

Yes, but what will we do in Paris then?

[NICAISE.]
Ah! By God I will do just as the others do, I will drink, I will eat, I . . . I will spend many sous. . . . I will see the fine Damsels who set out the little jug, and the taverns, and everything, and you will too.

[HARLEQUIN.]
Listen: give a few of those crowns that we are going to spend in Paris.

[NICAISE.]
Crowns? By my faith, I don't got any of them at all.

[HARLEQUIN.]
You don't have any at all?

[NICAISE.]
No.

[HARLEQUIN.]
And where the Devil do you expect me to get any? I don't have any either.

[NICAISE.]
Ah, by our Lady, that is the *tu autem:*[1] good, I will earn some before I get there.

[HARLEQUIN.]
And how will we earn some?

[NICAISE.]
How? ah by gosh, haven't you seen, by your leave, what happened to our neighbor Thomas? He was not any more monied than we are when he went there. Well, he began as a clerk with a lawyer. And then, he married his wife, and then afterward the husband died, and then he became the lawyer hisself, and then he bought the house for which his father was the farmer, and then . . .

[HARLEQUIN.]
But what are these lawyers?

[NICAISE.]
Wait . . . Just about they are people who has themselves paid for taking everyone's property. Oh they are the biggest Gentlemen in Paris.

[HARLEQUIN.]
See, see. The Devil, let's go to Paris right away.

[NICAISE.]
Oh, then there are also Doctors who get fat by making other people suffer from hunger. And then Merchants who ruin themselves very quickly in order to get rich all at once. Oh, that one is the best Perfession of all.

[HARLEQUIN.]
Hee, hee, hee!

[NICAISE.]
What are you laughing at?

[HARLEQUIN.]
I am laughing at my invention: I want to make myself into a merchant, doctor, and lawyer all at the same time. Oh, how rich I will be, how rich I will be! But, by the way, have you had lunch?

[NICAISE.]
Me, no; I only took two eggs before leaving along with a quarter loaf of bread and a tankard of wine. By our Lady, it was eight hours ago, my piehole is empty.

[HARLEQUIN.]
Well then, let's eat at the first tavern.

[NICAISE.]
Yes, you say that you don't have any money.

[HARLEQUIN.]
What difference does that make? You will pay, you will.

[NICAISE.]
By gosh, I don't have anything to get rid of the devil.[2]

[HARLEQUIN.]
I'm dying of hunger; how do you want to take me to Paris if you don't have any money?

[NICAISE.]
Ah! I didn't think about it.

[HARLEQUIN.]
The Devil take you, you and your trip. When I have died of hunger on the road it will be a fine time to make me rich there.

[NICAISE.]
Listen a good intervention is occurring to me. No . . . if . . . if it does . . . yes by gosh; let's go, jump to, cheer up, Harlequin, my friend, my brave comrade. I will have money. Jump to then.

HARLE[QUIN.]
Try the ra . . .

NICAISE.
Louder, louder.

HARLEQ[UIN.]
Te ri le ron le ra. . . . What the Devil, do you want me to break my neck? Well, where are the crowns?

NIC[AISE.]
They'll come, they'll come: they're just about here.

HARLE[QUIN.]
Let's see.

NIC[AISE.]
You know that they promised a hundred crowns to everyone who could turn in and bring in a thief.

HARL[EQUIN.]
Ah, you bet, hurry up, I'm thirsty.

NI[CAISE.]
Oh, wait your turn! wait your turn. I know all about your big belly. Let's say you are a thief.

HARL[EQUIN.]
Huh?

NI[CAISE.]
I am going to turn you in. You don't deny it. They put you in prison. And I get the hundred crowns: eh, eh!

HARL[EQUIN.]
And when I am in prison what will happen to me?

NI[CAISE.]
What a question, ah by gosh you will be hanged. There's so many big gentlemen who get scoundrels to pass as honest folk. Well, I, we, will get an honest man to pass for a scoundrel. It is entirely the same difference. But how the money will come.

HARL[EQUIN.]
Yes it will be a funny trick. But . . .

NIC[AISE.]
Oh, neither, nor, but, for. The Devil has lost sight of this one.

HARL[EQUIN.]
And afterward, you will give me half the crowns?

NIC[AISE.]
Of course, do you take me for a thief?

HARL[EQUIN.]
Oh no, but how will you give me the money after I have been hanged?

NIC[AISE.]
What the Devil. You will only have to come to take it. Go on, I doesn't want to fool you.

HARL[EQUIN.]
Wait, let's look for another way, this one doesn't look pretty. There, don't joke around then.

[NICAISE.]
Let's stay at rest then.

[HARLEQUIN.]
Oh look, I'm hungry, I'm not in a laughing mood.

[NICAISE.]
Darn it, you see, when one is ready to eat one isn't in a good mood.

[HARLEQUIN.]
The Devil take me if I don't give you a punch.

[NICAISE.]
Our friend, you will catch yourself some Orion.[3]

[HARLEQUIN.]
Just you wait, I am going to joke around with your ears.

[NICAISE.]
Watch out. I'll teach you to frolic.

SCENE III.
[HARLEQUIN, GRACIOUS, BARBERRY.]

[GRACIOUS.]
Look, that bumpkin has left; we can now make ourselves visible.

HAR[LEQUIN.]
Look what's happened I am fed up with the trip. Oh, but nay, if the fancy ever takes me to get myself hanged, I want to have earned it; everything must have a reason. Nevertheless . . . I am hungry. And I have nothing to eat. If I go back to the village they will make fun of me. If I don't go back . . . ah, ah, ah . . .

GRAC[IOUS.]
What's the matter, my friend? You look very surprised.

[HARLEQUIN.]
It's that I didn't expect to find such pretty birds in this woods.

[GRACIOUS.]
Our encounter doesn't bother you then?

[HARLEQUIN.]
Oh no, just the opposite.

[BARBERRY.]
Still, I bet he would rather have found a good lunch.

[HARLEQUIN.]
Not at all. I would forget the lunch right after eating it, and I will always remember you, for you are very pretty.

[GRACIOUS.]
How gallant Harlequin is, then.

[HARLEQUIN.]
Harlequin! Do you know my name?

[BARBERRY.]
Doubtless, don't you see that we are fairies?

[HARLEQUIN.]
Aiuto;[4] have mercy.

[BARBERRY.]
Poltroon, we aren't here to do you any harm.

[HARLEQUIN.]
Ah! Ladies, my flesh is as tough as the devil. Nothing is tender but my heart.

[BARBERRY.]
Oh, how amusing he is! Are you afraid that we will eat you?

[HARLEQUIN.]
No, not you: I would not be at all sorry to be munched on by your cute little teeth: but your friends the ogres . . . ah! I am trembling at seeing some of them arrive unexpectedly.

[GRACIOUS.]
Set your mind at rest, the ogres are not our friends, and we are not mischievous fairies.

[HARLEQUIN.]
No fooling, no fooling?

[GRACIOUS.]
No fooling.

[HARLEQUIN.]
Ah, then, I believe you, because it seems to me that you are too pretty to be deceitful.

[GRACIOUS.]
[Aside.] That guarantee has hardly any credit, alas I don't know why. *(To Harlequin).* Rest assured that we are not deceiving you.

[HARLEQUIN.]
How can you be fairies? Do fairies have bodies, then, of flesh like women?

[GRACIOUS.]
Doubtless. Do you believe that we are shadows?

[HARLEQUIN].
Let's see . . .

[GRACIOUS.]
Gently, Mr. Harlequin.

[HARLEQUIN.]
It's only to know: I love Phirlirsolophy, I do.

[GRACIOUS.]
It seems to me that it is making you very curious.

[BARBERRY.]
Oh now tell us a little; do you seriously find us pretty?

[HARLEQUIN.]
Do I find you pretty? Sangue de mi,[5] there are no macaroons, no lazagna, no crosetti, no parmisan cheese as pretty as you.

[GRACIOUS.]
Very good. But which of us pleases you more? Tell us sincerely.

[HARLEQUIN.]
Which . . . oh, you are very charming, you are . . . and you too. Wait . . . tic, toc, tic, toc. . . . toc, toc, ta, ta, ta, ta; . . . by my faith, I believe that my heart is beating on both sides.

[GRACIOUS.]
Nevertheless, you must decide: for one of us wants to be your mistress and even your wife. But you have to guess.

[HARLEQUIN.]
How, then?

[ORANGE BLOSSOM.][6]
The one who loves you is called Orange Blossom, the other is called Barberry.

[HARLEQUIN.]
And which one is called Orange Blossom?

[BARBERRY.]
That is the question.

[HARLEQUIN.]
To be sure, I am very perplexed. I am going to take both of you.

[ORANGE BLOSSOM.]
That cannot be, you must make a choice. If you guess well and you choose Orange Blossom, first she will marry you.

[HARLEQUIN.]
Eh eh, how funny that will be.

[ORANGE BLOSSOM.]
She will load you with riches.

[HARLEQUIN.]
Good.

[ORANGE BLOSSOM.]
She will give you the finest clothes.

[HARLEQUIN.]
Oh, I'm satisfied with my own.

[ORANGE BLOSSOM.]
She will give you good cheer.

[HARLEQUIN.]
That's good.

[BARBERRY.]
Four meals a day.

[HARLEQUIN.]
That's not too much.

[ORANGE BLOSSOM.]
Chickens, pigeons, partridges . . .

[BARBERRY.]
Mutton legs, turkeys, beef sirloins.

[ORANGE BLOSSOM.]
Ragout, pies, cakes . . .

[BARBERRY.]
Hams, cervelats,[7] sausages.

[HARLEQUIN.]
Wait, you are strangling me, I don't have time to chew.

[ORANGE BLOSSOM.]
Burgundy wines, champagnes, muscat, malmsey.

[HARLEQUIN.]
Ah: that washes down my tidbits a little.

[BARBERRY.]
Liquor, claret brandy, fruit brandy.

[HARLEQUIN.]
What good things, what good things. Ah, let me indulge myself with them. And if by chance I choose Barberry?

[BARBERRY.]
You will be put in a magnificent chariot with your richly appareled mistress.

[HARLEQUIN.]
That will be fine, won't it?

[ORANGE BLOSSOM.]
Doubtless. You will be taken to the temple with a magnificent procession.

[HARLEQUIN.]
Eh, eh . . .

[ORANGE BLOSSOM.]
You will be married.

[HARLEQUIN.]
Very good.

[ORANGE BLOSSOM.]
Then you will be led . . .

[HARLEQUIN.]
To the nuptial bed.

[ORANGE BLOSSOM.]
No, to the seashore.

[HARLEQUIN.]
Ahem.

[ORANGE BLOSSOM.]
A rock will be fastened to your neck.

[HARLEQUIN.]
What for?

[ORANGE BLOSSOM.]
And you will be thrown in.

[HARLEQUIN.]
What, completely?

[BARBERRY.]
Truly, yes.

[HARLEQUIN.]
That is a nasty Ceremony. I'll stick with Orange Blossom.

[ORANGE BLOSSOM.]
Yes but you must guess which of the two of us she is, and if you are mistaken . . .

[HARLEQUIN.]
I will be drowned.

[BARBERRY.]
Exactly.

[HARLEQUIN.]
What the devil to do. . . . Let's see if it is you who loves me.

[BARBERRY.]
It might be.

[HARLEQUIN.]
And you, don't you find me very pretty?

[ORANGE BLOSSOM.]
You suspect yes, I wager.

[HARLEQUIN.]
They are craftier than I am, I cannot find anything out.

[BARBERRY.]
You are very perplexed, choose the one that pleases you better.

[HARLEQUIN.]
That's easily said: but I must be certain that the one who pleases me better is called Orange Blossom. If it were you, for example . . .

[BARBERRY.]
Then I am the one you like better?

[HARLEQUIN.]
Let's go slowly; its a question of getting married or drowned: that deserves reflection. . . .

[ORANGE BLOSSOM.]
You can renounce both; then you run no risk.

[HARLEQUIN.]
And I will still have hams, pies, fruit brandy?

[BARBERRY.]
No, it is only with Orange Blossom that you can enjoy all that.

[HARLEQUIN.]
Oh my dear Orange Blossom, I cannot make up my mind to abandon you. I would rather risk my life to have the pleasure of possessing you than preserve it without you.

[ORANGE BLOSSOM.]
To which of the two of us are you addressing such a tender speech?

[HARLEQUIN.]
Fine question! To the one called Orange Blossom.

[BARBERRY.]
There's a man very much in love.

[HARLEQUIN.]
Devil take it, there is only that nasty ocean that bothers me. Without that my choice would be made right off.

[GRACIOUS.]
Well then, we grant you twenty-four hours; try to choose well at the end of that time. We are going to give you a wand that will protect you from a jealous Enchanter, in love with Orange Blossom; his spells will not be able to harm you as long as you possess it. It will be up to you to be careful not to let it be taken away from you. Follow us.

[HARLEQUIN.]
Oh che gusto, I am going to be a half sorcerer.

SCENE IV.

PARAFARAGARAMUS.

By the strength of my art I have just seen the unworthy choice that Orange Blossom is making. Can it be that she is giving such an affront to an Enchanter such as myself? See ingrate, what you are losing, see the earth covered with my exploits. Always great in my plans, I have disdained all easy labors. My wonders have not been seen to favor the avarice of old men, the coquetry of women, the infidelity of men, the double-dealing of bonzes,[8] the greed of judges, the arrogance of ignoramuses. More perilous enterprises have occupied me: so many young fools made lovable by their absurdity, so many Charlatans believed to be learned by dint of showing their ignorance, so many cowards compensated for their cowardice, so many authors applauded for their stupidity. That is what my illusions have produced. That is how my power has been able to dazzle all eyes. Alas, and of what use is my vast knowledge if it does not make me more skillful at conquering a heart? At least let's avenge ourselves on the unworthy object of her ardor, let's punish Harlequin. But let's try skillfully to take away the wand that Orange Blossom has given him. Here strength is useless: ruse must be employed. I perceive this wretched rival: let's change attire.

[SCENE V.]
[HARLEQUIN].

Harlequin enters armed with his wand which he contemplates in a thousand comical ways, and with which he makes a thousand contortions.[9]

Narcissus,[1] *or, The Lover of Himself*

Comedy, by J.-J. Rousseau,
Performed by the Actors of the King, December 18, 1752.

CAST

LISIMON.
VALERE, LUCINDE } Children of Lisimon.
ANGÉLIQUE, LÉANDRE } Brother and sister, Lisimon's pupils.
MARTON, Servant.
FRONTIN, Valére's Valet.

The Scene is in Valére's Apartment.

SCENE I.
LUCINDE, MARTON.

LUCINDE.

I just saw my brother taking a walk in the garden, let's hurry before he gets back, and put his portrait on his dressing-table.

MARTON.

Here it is, Miss, changed in its attire so as to make him unrecognizable. Although he is the prettiest man in the world, as a woman he shines here with new graces.

LUCINDE.

With his delicacy and with the affectation of his adornment Valére is a sort of woman hidden under the clothes of a man, and this portrait cross-dressed this way,[2] seems less to disguise him than to return him to his natural state.

MARTON.

Very well, where is the harm? Since today women try to make them-

selves closer to men, isn't it fitting for them to meet them halfway, and try to gain in attractiveness as much as the women do in steadfastness? Thanks to fashion, all will put themselves on a level more easily.

LUCINDE.

I cannot get used to such ridiculous fashions. Perhaps our sex will be lucky enough not to please any less even though it becomes more worthy of esteem. But as for men, I feel sorry for their blindness. What do those featherbrained young fellows mean by usurping all our rights? Do they hope to please women better by endeavoring to resemble them?

MARTON.

As for that, they would be wrong, and women hate each other too much to love someone who resembles them. But let's get back to the portrait. Aren't you afraid that this little raillery will offend the Knight?

LUCINDE.

No, Marton; my brother is naturally good: aside from his flaw he is even reasonable. He will feel that, by making him a silent and teasing reproach with this portrait, I have thought only of curing him of a failing that jars even that tender, that lovable pupil of my father whom Valére is marrying today. It is doing her a favor to correct her lover's faults, and you know how much I need the efforts of that dear friend to free myself from her brother Léandre, whom my father wants to make me marry too.

MARTON.

So that young stranger, that Cléonte whom you saw last summer at Passy,[3] has a strong hold on your heart?

LUCINDE.

I don't deny it at all; I even count on the promise he gave me of turning up again soon, and on the promise that Angélique gave me of inducing her brother to renounce me.

MARTON.

Fine, renounce! Consider that your looks will have more strength to confirm that engagement than Angélique can have to break it.

LUCINDE.

Without arguing over your flattering remarks, I will tell you that since Léandre has never seen me, it will be easy for his sister to warn him, and

to make him understand that, since he cannot be happy with a woman whose heart is engaged elsewhere, he cannot do any better than to extricate himself with a decent refusal.

MARTON.

A decent refusal! Ah! Miss, to refuse a woman like you along with forty thousand crowns, this is a decency of which Léandre will never be capable. *(Aside.)* If she knew that Léandre and Cléonte are the same person, that child would change her epithet.

LUCINDE.

Ah! Marton, I hear some noise; let's hide this portrait quickly. It is doubtless my brother who is coming back, and while amusing ourselves by chattering, we have deprived ourselves of the leisure to execute our plan.

MARTON.

No, it is Angélique.

SCENE II.
ANGÉLIQUE, LUCINDE, MARTON.

ANGÉLIQUE.

My dear Lucinde; you know how reluctantly I joined in your plan when you had the adornment of Valére's portrait changed into a woman's attire. Now that I see you ready to execute it, I'm terrified that the displeasure of seeing himself toyed with will set him against us. Give up, I beg you, this frivolous teasing. I feel that I cannot find any savor for making fun at the risk of my heart's repose.

LUCINDE.

How timid you are! As long as you are his mistress, Valére loves you too much to hold against you everything you might do to him. Consider that you have only one day to give vent to your whims, and that his turn will come only too soon. Moreover, it is a question of curing him of a foible that exposes him to raillery, and that is properly a mistress's work. We can correct a lover's faults. But, alas! A husband's must be endured.

ANGÉLIQUE.

But after all, in what respect do you find him so ridiculous? Since he is lovable, is he so greatly wrong to love himself, and aren't we setting the

example for him? He seeks to please. Ah, if that is a fault, what more charming virtue could a man carry into society!

MARTON.
Above all, into the society of women.

ANGÉLIQUE.
Still, Lucinde, if you rely on me, let's suppress both the portrait and all that air of raillery that also might just as well pass for an insult as for a correction.

LUCINDE.
Oh! No. I will not lose the costs of my industry this way. But I intend to run the risks for success all alone, and nothing obliges you to be the accomplice in a business in which you can be nothing but the witness.

MARTON.
A fine distinction!

LUCINDE.
I shall be delighted to see the look on Valére's face. However he takes the thing, in any case it will be a rather amusing scene.

MARTON.
I understand. The pretext is to correct Valére: but the true motive is to laugh at his expense. There is the genius and the goodness of women. They often correct ridiculous things while dreaming of nothing but amusing themselves.

ANGÉLIQUE.
In the end, you intend to do it, but I warn you that you will answer to me for the result.

LUCINDE.
So be it.

ANGÉLIQUE.
For as long as we have been together, you have done me a hundred turns for which I owe you punishment. If this business causes me the slightest worry with Valére, watch out for yourself.

LUCINDE.
Yes, yes.

ANGÉLIQUE.
Consider Léandre a little.

LUCINDE.
Ah! My dear Angélique . . .

ANGÉLIQUE.
Oh, if you estrange your brother from me, I swear to you that you will marry mine. *(Aside.)* Marton, you have promised me secrecy.

MARTON, *aside.*
Fear nothing.

LUCINDE.
Still, I . . .

MARTON.
I hear the Knight's voice. Make your decision as quickly as possible, unless you want to give him a circle of girls while he dresses.

LUCINDE.
We must avoid having him notice us. *(She puts the portrait on his dressing table.)* Now the trap is set.

MARTON.
I want to lay in wait a little for my man so as to see . . .

LUCINDE.
Quiet. Save us.

ANGÉLIQUE.
What ill forebodings I have about all this.

SCENE III.
VALÉRE, FRONTIN.

VALÉRE.
Sangaride, this day is a great day for you.[4]

FRONTIN.

Sangaride; that's to say, Angélique. Yes, the wedding day is a great day, and one that even devilishly makes the ones that follow it longer.

VALÉRE.

What pleasure I shall taste at making Angélique happy!

FRONTIN.

Do you intend to make her a widow?

VALÉRE.

Malicious joker. . . . You know how much I love her. Tell me; what do you know that could be lacking to her felicity? With much love, a bit of wit, and a face . . . as you see; one can, I think, always consider oneself to be rather certain of pleasing.

FRONTIN.

The thing is indubitable, and you have performed the same experiment on yourself.

VALÉRE.

What I feel sorry for in all this is I do not know how many little persons my marriage will cause to pine away with regret, and who will not know what to do with their hearts anymore.

FRONTIN.

Oh! but yes they will. Those who loved you for example, will busy themselves with detesting your dear other half. The others. . . . But where the devil can those others be found?

VALÉRE.

The morning is getting on; it is time to get dressed to go to see Angélique. Let's go. *(He sits down at his dressing-table.)* How do you find me this morning? I don't have any fire at all in my eyes; I have a poor color; it seems to me that I am not at all up to the usual standard.

FRONTIN.

Up to the usual standard! No, you are only up to your usual standard.

VALÉRE.

The use of rouge is an extremely nasty habit; in the end I shall not be

able to do without it and I shall be extremely hard put without it. Where is my patchbox, then? But what do I see there? A portrait. . . . Ah! Frontin; the charming object . . . where did you pick up this portrait?

FRONTIN.
Me? I wish to be hanged if I know what you are talking about.

VALÉRE.
What! It wasn't you who put this portrait on my dressing-table?

FRONTIN.
No, hope to die.

VALÉRE.
Who would it be then?

FRONTIN.
By my faith, I don't know anything about it. It can't be anyone but either the devil or you.

VALÉRE.
Or someone else. You are being paid to be quiet. . . . Do you know how much Angélique suffers by comparison with this object? . . . By my honor this is the prettiest face I have seen in my life. What eyes, Frontin! . . . I believe that they look like mine.

FRONTIN.
That says it all.

VALÉRE.
I find much of my manner in her. . . . She is, by my faith, charming. . . . Ah! If her mind matches all that. . . . But her taste answers for me about her mind. The minx is an expert in merit.

FRONTIN.
What the devil! Let's have a look at all these marvels.

VALÉRE.
Hold on, hold on. Do you think you are fooling me with your simple manner. Do you believe I am a novice in intrigues?

FRONTIN *(aside.)*.

Am I deceived! It's him. . . . it's him himself. How decked out he is! What flowers! What tassels! Without a doubt it's one of Lucinde's tricks; Marton will have done at least half of it. Let's not disturb their teasing at all. My previous indiscretions have cost me too dearly.

VALÉRE.

Well? Does Mr. Frontin recognize the original of this painting?

FRONTIN.

Bah! Do I know it! Several hundred kicks in the ass, and just as many boxes on the ear that I have had the honor of receiving from it in particular have solidified our acquaintance.

VALÉRE.

A girl, kicks! That's a little strong.

FRONTIN.

They are little bits of domestic impatience that seize her over nothing.

VALÉRE.

What? Would you have been in her service?

FRONTIN.

Yes, Sir; and I even have the honor of still being her very humble servant.

VALÉRE.

It would be rather funny if there were in Paris a pretty woman who was not of my acquaintance! . . . Tell me sincerely. Is the original as lovable as the portrait?

FRONTIN.

How; lovable! Do you know, Sir, that if anyone could approach your perfections, I would find that she alone compares to you.

VALÉRE, *considering the portrait.*

My heart can't resist. . . . Frontin, tell me the name of that beautiful girl.

FRONTIN.

Ah! By my faith, here I am caught without a trump.[5]

VALÉRE.
What's she called? Speak then.

FRONTIN.
She's called . . . she's called . . . she's called nothing at all. She is an anonymous girl, like so many others.

VALÉRE.
Into what sad suspicions is this rogue throwing me! Could such charming features be those of a mere wench?

FRONTIN.
Why not? Beauty is pleased to adorn visages that take their pride from it alone.

VALÉRE.
What, it is . . .

FRONTIN.
A little person, very coquettish, very mincing, very vain without very much reason for being so: in a word, a true female fop.

VALÉRE.
Look at how these knavish valets talk about the people they have served. Nevertheless, I must get a look. Tell me, where is her abode?

FRONTIN.
Good, abode? Did she ever have an abode?

VALÉRE.
If you provoke me . . . Where does she lodge, rascal?

FRONTIN.
By my faith, Sir, so as not to lie to you, you know it just as well as I do.

VALÉRE.
What?

FRONTIN.
I swear to you that I do not know the original of this portrait any better than you do.

VALÉRE.
You aren't the one who put it there?

FRONTIN.
No, may the plague smother me.

VALÉRE.
These ideas that you gave me about her . . .

FRONTIN.
Do you see that you furnished me with them yourself? Is there anyone in the world as ridiculous as that?

VALÉRE.
What! I will not be able to discover where this portrait came from? The mystery and the difficulty arouse my eagerness. For, I admit it to you, I am very truly smitten.

FRONTIN, *aside.*
The thing is priceless! Look at him in love with himself.

VALÉRE.
Nevertheless, Angélique, the charming Angélique. . . . In truth, I don't understand anything about my heart, and I want to see this new mistress before settling anything on my marriage.

FRONTIN.
What, Sir! You don't. . . . Ah! you are joking.

VALÉRE.
No, I tell you very seriously that I cannot offer my hand to Angélique, as long as the uncertainty of my feelings is an obstacle to our mutual happiness. I cannot marry her today; that's a settled point.

FRONTIN.
Yes, with you. But the Gentleman your father, who has also made his own separate little resolutions, is the least likely man in the world to give way to yours; you know that compliance is not his weak point.

VALÉRE.
She must be found, whatever the price might be. Let's go, Frontin, let's rush, look everywhere.

FRONTIN.

Let's go, let's rush, let's fly; let's make the inventory and the description of all the pretty girls in Paris. Plague, the good little book we would have there! Rare book, the reading of which would not put one to sleep!

VALÉRE.

Let's hurry. Come and finish dressing me.

FRONTIN.

Wait, here is the Gentleman your father just in time. Let's ask him to be one of the party.

VALÉRE.

Shut up, torturer. What an unlucky mischance!

SCENE IV.
LISIMON, VALÉRE, FRONTIN.

LISIMON, *who should always have a brusque tone.*

Well, my son?

VALÉRE.

Frontin, a chair for the Gentleman.

LISIMON.

I want to remain standing. I have only two words to say to you.

VALÉRE.

Sir, I cannot listen to you unless you are seated.

LISIMON.

What the devil! I, I don't want to. You will see that the impertinent fellow pays compliments to his father.

VALÉRE.

Respect . . .

LISIMON.

Oh! Respect consists in obeying me and in not bothering me at all. But, what is this? Still not dressed? On your wedding day? This is a pretty thing! Angélique has not received your visit, then?

VALÉRE.

I was finishing doing my hair, and I was going to get dressed in order to present myself decently before her.

LISIMON.

Is so much apparatus necessary to do up your hair and put on a suit? To be sure, in my youth, we made better use of our time, and without losing three-quarters of the day strutting in front of a mirror, we knew how to forward our business with the beautiful ladies with a more just claim.

VALÉRE.

Nevertheless, it seems that when one wants to be loved, one could not make too much of an effort into making oneself lovable, and that such neglectful attire must not betoken lovers very occupied with the effort of pleasing.

LISIMON.

Pure stupidity. A little negligence sometimes goes well when one is in love. Women hold us in better account from our eagerness than from the time that we have lost at our dressing table, and, without affecting so much delicacy in our attire, we have more of it in our heart. But let's leave that aside. I had thought of delaying your marriage until Léandre's arrival so that he might have the pleasure of attending and so that I myself might have that of bringing about the wedding of him and your sister on the same day.

VALÉRE, *softly.*

Frontin, what luck!

FRONTIN.

Yes, a marriage postponed; that's always so much gained on repentance.

LISIMON.

What do you say about it, Valére? It seems that it wouldn't be seemly to marry the sister without waiting for the brother, since he is on his way.

VALÉRE.

I say, my father, that nothing could be better thought out.

LISIMON.
This delay would not cause you any pain, then?

VALÉRE.
Eagerness to obey you will always overcome all my reluctance.

LISIMON.
Nevertheless, it was out of fear of making you dissatisfied that I hadn't proposed it to you.

VALÉRE.
Your will is no less the rule for my desires than it is of my actions. *(Aside.)* Frontin, what a fine fellow of a father!

LISIMON.
I am charmed to find you so docile, you will have the merit of it cheaply; for, by a letter that I just received, Léandre informs me that he is arriving today.

VALÉRE.
Well then, my father?

LISIMON.
Well then, my son; this way nothing will be disturbed.

VALÉRE.
What, you would like to get him married as he arrives?

FRONTIN.
Get a man married still in his boots!

LISIMON.
No, not that; since, besides, Lucinde and he have never seen each other, they must be left the leisure of getting to know each other: but he will attend his sister's marriage, and I shall not have the harshness of making such a compliant son pine away.

VALÉRE.
Sir . . .

LISIMON.

Fear nothing; I am too well acquainted with and approve of your eagerness too much to play you such a dirty trick.

VALÉRE.

My father . . .

LISIMON.

Let's leave that aside, I tell you, I can guess everything you could say to me.

VALÉRE.

But, my father . . . I have made . . . some reflections. . . .

LISIMON.

Some reflections, you? I was wrong. I would not have guessed that one. Upon what, then, if you please, do your sublime meditations circulate?

VALÉRE.

On the inconveniences of marriage.

FRONTIN.

There is a text for commentary.

LISIMON.

Even a fool can reflect sometimes; but never until after the foolish act. There I recognize my son.

VALÉRE.

How, after the foolish act? But I have not gotten married yet.

LISIMON.

Learn, mister philosopher, that there is no difference between my will and the act. You could have moralized when I proposed the thing to you, and you were so eager yourself. I would have wholeheartedly listened to your reasons. For you know whether I am compliant.

FRONTIN.

Oh! Yes, Sir, on that score we are in a position to do justice to you.

LISIMON.

But today when everything is done with, you can speculate at your ease, this will be, if it please you, without prejudice to the wedding.

VALÉRE.

Constraint redoubles my reservation. Consider, I beg you, the importance of the business. Please grant me several days. . . .

LISIMON.

Farewell, my son; you will be married this evening, or else . . . you understand me. What a dupe I was from the rascal's phoney deference.

SCENE V.
VALÉRE, FRONTIN

VALÉRE.

Heavens! What pain his inflexibility gives me!

FRONTIN.

Yes, married or disinherited! To marry a wife or poverty! One hesitates to choose.

VALÉRE.

I hesitate! No; my choice was still uncertain, my father's stubbornness settled it.

FRONTIN.

In favor of Angélique?

VALÉRE.

Exactly the opposite.

FRONTIN.

I congratulate you, Sir, for such a heroic resolution. You are going to die from hunger as a worthy martyr to liberty. But if it were a question of marrying the portrait? Ahem! Would marriage appear so horrible to you any more?

VALÉRE.

No; but if my father claimed to force me to it, I believe that I would

resist with the same firmness, and I feel that my heart would recall me toward Angélique as soon as someone wanted to estrange me from her.

FRONTIN.

What docility! If you do not inherit the Gentleman your father's goods, at least you will inherit his virtues. *(Looking at the portrait.)* Ah!

VALÉRE.

What's the matter with you?

FRONTIN.

Since we fell into disfavor, this portrait seems to me to have taken on a famished physiognomy, a certain strung-out appearance.

VALÉRE.

Your impertinent remarks are costing us too much time. We should already have gone over half of Paris.

He leaves.

FRONTIN.

At the pace you are going, you will soon have gone round the bend.[6] Nevertheless let's wait for the outcome of all this; and, on my side, in order to pretend an imaginary search, let's go hide in a tavern.

SCENE VI.
ANGÉLIQUE, MARTON.

MARTON.

Ah! ah, ah, ah! What a humorous scene! Who would have foreseen it? What you have lost, Miss, by not being hidden here with me when he was so completely smitten with his own charms!

ANGÉLIQUE.

He saw himself with my eyes.

MARTON.

What! You will be weak enough to preserve feelings for a man capable of such a fault?

ANGÉLIQUE.

He appears very guilty to you! Nevertheless, what can one reproach him for but the universal vice of his age? Do not believe, however, that

insensitive to the Knight's insult, I shall allow him to prefer over me the first face that strikes him agreeably this way. I have too much love not to have delicacy, and from this day forth Valére will sacrifice his follies to me, or I shall sacrifice my love to my reason.

MARTON.

I fear very much that the one will be as difficult as the other.

ANGÉLIQUE.

Here is Lucinde. My brother is to arrive today. Be very careful that she not suspect him of being her unknown man until it is time for it.

SCENE VII.
LUCINDE, ANGÉLIQUE, MARTON.

MARTON.

Mademoiselle, I wager that you would never guess what the effect of the portrait has been? You will surely laugh about it.

LUCINDE.

Eh! Marton; let's leave aside the portrait; I have many other things to think about. My dear Angélique, I am disconsolate, I am dying. This is the moment I need all your aid. My father just announced to me Léandre's arrival. He wants me to be ready to receive him today and to give him my hand in a week.

ANGÉLIQUE.

What do you find so terrible in that?

MARTON.

What, terrible! To want to marry a beautiful eighteen-year-old to a rich and well-formed twenty-two-year-old man! In truth, that is scary, and there isn't any girl of the age of reason who wouldn't be given a fever by the idea of such a marriage.

LUCINDE.

I do not want to hide anything from you; I received a letter from Cléonte at the same time; he will be in Paris right away; he is going to call upon my father; he urges me to delay my marriage: in sum, he still loves me. Ah! my dear, will you be insensitive to my heart's panic and to that friendship you have sworn for me?

ANGÉLIQUE.

The dearer that friendship is to me the more I should wish to see its bonds tightened by your marriage with my brother. Nevertheless, Lucinde, your peace of mind is the foremost of my desires, and my wishes are even more in conformity with yours than you think.

LUCINDE.

Deign then to remember your promises. Make Léandre understand very well that my heart cannot be his; that . . .

MARTON.

My God! Let's not swear anything. Men have so many expedients and women such inconstancy, that if Léandre begins to get it into his head to please you. I bet that he would completely succeed in it in spite of you.

LUCINDE.

Marton!

MARTON.

I don't give him two days to supplant your unknown man without even leaving you the slightest regret for him.

LUCINDE.

Let's continue. . . . Dear Angélique, I count on your efforts; and in the turmoil that is agitating me, I am rushing to try everything with my father to delay, if I can, a marriage that my heart's preoccupation makes me foresee with fright.

She leaves.

ANGÉLIQUE.

I ought to stop her. But Lisimon is not a man to give way to his daughter's entreaties, and all her prayers will do nothing but reaffirm this marriage for which she herself wishes even more than she appears to fear it. If I take pleasure in playing on her anxieties for several moments, it's to make the outcome sweeter for her. What other vengeance could be authorized by friendship?

MARTON.

I am going to follow her; and without betraying our secret keep her, if possible, from committing some folly.

SCENE VIII.

ANGÉLIQUE.

Madwoman that I am! My mind is occupied in teasing while I have so many things preying on my heart. Alas! Perhaps at this moment Valére is confirming his infidelity. Perhaps informed about everything and ashamed at letting himself be surprised, he is offering his heart to some other object out of spite. For that's the way men are: they never avenge themselves more eagerly than when they are most in the wrong. But here he is, still preoccupied with his portrait.

SCENE IX.
ANGÉLIQUE, VALÉRE.

VALÉRE, *without seeing Angélique.*

I'm rushing about without knowing where I should look for that charming object. Will love not guide my steps?

ANGÉLIQUE, *aside.*

Ingrate! It is guiding him only too well.

VALÉRE.

Thus love always has its pains. I must experience them looking for the beauty that I love, not being able to find her to make her love me.

ANGÉLIQUE, *aside.*

What impertinence! Alas! How can someone be so conceited and so lovable both at the same time?

VALÉRE.

I must wait for Frontin; perhaps he will have had more success. In any case, Angélique adores me. . . .

ANGÉLIQUE, *aside.*

Ah, traitor! You know my weak point.

VALÉRE.

After all, I still feel that I will lose nothing with her: her heart, her charms, she's got everything.

ANGÉLIQUE, *aside.*

He will do me the honor of accepting me as his fallback.

VALÉRE.

How aware I am of how whimsical my feelings are! I am giving up the possession of a charming object to whom, at bottom, my inclination still brings me back. I am exposing myself to my father's disfavor in order to be stubborn over a beauty who is perhaps unworthy of my sighs, perhaps imaginary, based on the sole evidence of a portrait fallen from the clouds and certainly a flattering one. What capriciousness! What folly! But what! Aren't folly and caprice the distinctive traits of a lovable man? *(Looking at the portrait.)* What graces! . . . What features! . . . How enchanting that is! . . . How divine that is! Ah! May Angélique not flatter herself at standing up to comparison with so many charms.

ANGÉLIQUE, *seizing the portrait.*

Assuredly, I do not care to. But let me be permitted to share your admiration. At least acquaintance with the charms of that fortunate rival will soften the shame of my defeat.

VALÉRE.

Oh heaven!

ANGÉLIQUE.

What's the matter with you then? You appear completely bewildered. I would never have known that a fop would be so easy to put out of countenance.

VALÉRE.

Ah! Cruel one, you know all the ascendancy you have over me, and you insult me without me being able to answer.

ANGÉLIQUE.

That's extremely badly done, in truth; and according to the rules you ought to be paying me insults. Go along, Sir Knight, I have pity for your perplexity. There is your portrait; and I am so little angry over you loving the original, that on this point your feelings are completely in agreement with mine.

VALÉRE.

What! You know the person[7] . . .

ANGÉLIQUE.

Not only do I know the person, but I can tell you that that person is the one I hold dearest in the world.

VALÉRE.

Truly, this is something new, and the language is a little peculiar in the mouth of a rival.

ANGÉLIQUE.

I don't know about that! But it is sincere. *(Aside.)* If he gets stirred up, I win.

VALÉRE.

She has much merit, then?

ANGÉLIQUE.

This person requires nothing else to have an infinite amount.

VALÉRE.

No faults at all, doubtless.

ANGÉLIQUE.

Oh! Many. This is a little bizarre person, capricious, flighty, giddy, fickle, and above all unbearably vain. But, what! This person is lovable for all that, and I predict in advance that you will love this person all the way to your grave.

VALÉRE.

You consent to it then?

ANGÉLIQUE.

Yes.

VALÉRE.

That will not make you angry?

ANGÉLIQUE.

No.

VALÉRE, *aside.*

Her indifference makes me despair. *(Aloud.)* Shall I dare to flatter

myself that you would like to make your union with her even closer for my sake?

ANGÉLIQUE.
That's all that I ask.

VALÉRE, *furious.*
You say all that with a calmness that charms me.

ANGÉLIQUE.
What then? You were just complaining about my playfulness, and at present you are getting angry over my coolness. I don't know what tone to take with you any more.

VALÉRE, *aside.*
I am bursting with chagrin. *(Aloud.)* Will Mademoiselle grant me the favor of making me acquainted with her?

ANGÉLIQUE.
That, for example, is a sort of service that I am very sure you do not expect from me: but I wish to go beyond your hope, and I promise to do so.

VALÉRE.
That will be soon, at least?

ANGÉLIQUE.
Perhaps as early as today.

VALÉRE.
I can no longer hold back.

He wants to leave.

ANGÉLIQUE, *aside.*
All this begins to augur well for me; he has too much chagrin not to have even more love. *(Aloud.)* Where are you going, Valére?

VALÉRE.
I see that my presence bothers you, and I am going to yield the place to you.

ANGÉLIQUE.

Ah! Not at all. I am going to depart myself: it is not just for me to chase you away from your own home.

VALÉRE.

Go, go; remember that the one who loves nothing does not deserve to be loved.

ANGÉLIQUE.

It would still be better to love nothing than to be in love with oneself.

SCENE X.

VALÉRE.

In love with oneself! Is it a crime to have a bit of feeling for one's own merit? Nevertheless, I am very stirred up. Is it possible for anyone to lose a lover like me without suffering? One would say that she looks at me as an ordinary man. Alas! I conceal the disturbance in my heart in vain, and I tremble at still loving her after her inconstancy. But no; my entire heart belongs only to this charming object. Let's rush to try some new searches, and let's combine the effort of providing for my happiness with that of exciting Angélique's jealousy. But here is Frontin.

SCENE XI.

VALÉRE, FRONTIN, *drunk.*

FRONTIN.

What the devil! I don't know why I can't keep myself upright; I have done my best to fortify myself.

VALÉRE.

Well then, Frontin, have you found . . .

FRONTIN.

Oh! Yes, Sir.

VALÉRE.

Ah! Heavens! Could it be?

FRONTIN.

Also I have had a lot of trouble.

VALÉRE.
Hurry up then and tell me. . . .

FRONTIN.
I had to go round to all the taverns in the neighborhood.

VALÉRE.
Taverns!

FRONTIN.
But I succeeded beyond my hopes.

VALÉRE.
Tell me then . . .

FRONTIN.
It was a fire . . . a froth. . . .

VALÉRE.
What the devil is this animal muttering?

FRONTIN.
Wait for me to straighten things out.

VALÉRE.
Shut up, drunkard, knave; or answer me about the orders I gave you on the subject of the original for the portrait.

FRONTIN.
Ah! Yes, the original; precisely. Rejoice, rejoice, I tell you.

VALÉRE.
Well then?

FRONTIN.
It was not at the White Cross, nor at the Golden Lion, nor the Pineapple,[8] nor . . .

VALÉRE.
Torturer, will you come to a conclusion?

FRONTIN.

Patience. Since it wasn't there, it must be somewhere else; and . . . oh, I shall find it, I shall find it. . . .

VALÉRE.

He's giving me an itch to knock him down; let's go.

SCENE XII.

FRONTIN.

Here I am, in fact, a rather pretty boy. . . . This floor is devilishly rough. Where was I? By my faith, I'm not there anymore. Ah! If it . . .

SCENE XIII.
LUCINDE, FRONTIN.

LUCINDE.

Frontin, where is your master?

FRONTIN.

But, I believe that he is looking for himself right now.

LUCINDE.

What, he is looking for himself?

FRONTIN.

Yes, he is looking for himself so as to get himself married.

LUCINDE.

What does this gibberish mean?

FRONTIN.

This gibberish! You don't understand any of it then?

LUCINDE.

No, in truth.

FRONTIN.

By my faith, neither do I: yet I am going to explain it to you, if you want.

LUCINDE.
How will you explain to me something you don't understand?

FRONTIN.
Oh! Lady, I have been studying, I have.

LUCINDE.
I believe he is drunk. Eh! Frontin, I beg you, summon up a little of your good sense; try to make yourself understood.

FRONTIN.
By God nothing is easier. Wait. It is a portrait. . . . metamor . . . no, metaphor . . . yes metaphorized. It is my master, it is a girl. . . . you have made a certain mixture. . . . For I guessed all that, I did. Well then, can one speak any more clearly?

LUCINDE.
No, that is not possible.

FRONTIN.
My master is the only one who doesn't understand any of it. For he has fallen in love with his resemblance.

LUCINDE.
What! Without recognizing himself?

FRONTIN.
Yes, and that's what is extraordinary about it.

LUCINDE.
Ah! I understand all the rest. And who could have foreseen that? Run fast, my poor Frontin, hurry to look for your master, and tell him that I have the most pressing things to communicate to him. Be careful, above all, not to speak to him about your guesses. Wait, here's for . . .

FRONTIN.
For drinking, right?

LUCINDE.
Oh no, you don't need that.

FRONTIN.
It will be only as a precaution.

SCENE XIV.

LUCINDE.
Let's not hesitate for a moment, let's admit everything; and whatever might happen, let's not put up with such a dear brother making himself ridiculous by the very means I had used to cure him of it. How unlucky I am! I have offended my brother; my father, irritated at my resistance, is only more absolute because of it; my absent lover is in no condition to help me; I fear the betrayal of a friend, and the measures of a man I cannot put up with: for I certainly hate him, and I feel that I would prefer death to Léandre.

SCENE XV.
ANGÉLIQUE, LUCINDE, MARTON.

ANGÉLIQUE.
Console yourself, Lucinde, Léandre does not want to cause you to die. I admit to you, however, that he did want to see you without your knowing it.

LUCINDE.
Alas, so much the worse.

ANGÉLIQUE.
But do you know that that is a "so much the worse" that is not excessively modest?

MARTON.
It's a little vein of fraternal blood.

LUCINDE.
My God, how wicked you are! What did he say after he saw me?

ANGÉLIQUE.
He told me that he would be in despair at obtaining you against your will.

MARTON.

He even added that your resistance gave him pleasure in some manner. But he said that with a certain air. . . . Do you know that judging from your feelings for him, I would wager that he is hardly indepted to you? Always hate him the same way always, he will hardly give you the slip.

LUCINDE.

That's not a terribly polite way of obeying.

MARTON.

One must not always be so obedienct to be polite with us other women.

ANGÉLIQUE.

The only condition he put on his renunciation is that you receive his farewell visit.

LUCINDE.

Oh, as for that, no; I give him a dispensation from it.

ANGÉLIQUE.

Ah! You cannot refuse him that. Moreover I promised it to him. I even warn you confidently that he counts very much on the success of this interview, and that he dares to hope that, after he has appeared to your eyes, you will no longer resist this alliance.

LUCINDE.

Then he has a great deal of vanity . . .

MARTON.

He flatters himself that he will tame you.

ANGÉLIQUE.

And it is only on this hope that he has consented to the treaty that I proposed to him.

MARTON.

I answer to you that he accepts the bargain only because he is very sure that you will not take him at his word.

LUCINDE.

He must be unbearably conceited. Very well, he has only to appear: I

shall be curious to see how he sets about deploying his charms; and I give you my word that he will be received with an air . . . have him come. He needs a lesson; count on him receiving one that is . . . instructive.

ANGÉLIQUE.
See, my dear Lucinde, one does not always keep to what one proposes for oneself; I wager that you will be softened.

MARTON.
Men are awfully skillful; you will see that you will be appeased.

LUCINDE.
Be at ease on that point.

ANGÉLIQUE.
Watch out, at least; don't say that we didn't warn you.

MARTON.
It won't be our fault if you let yourself be taken by surprise.

LUCINDE.
In truth, I believe that you want to drive me crazy.

ANGÉLIQUE, *aside to Marton.*
She's ready. *(Aloud.)* Since you wish it then, Marton is going to bring him to you.

LUCINDE.
What?

MARTON.
We left him in the antechamber, he will be here right away.

LUCINDE.
Oh dear Cléonte! Why can't you see the manner in which I receive your rivals?

SCENE XVI.
ANGÉLIQUE, LUCINDE, MARTON, LÉANDRE.

ANGÉLIQUE.
Approach Léandre, come to teach Lucinde how to become better

acquainted with her own heart; she believes she hates you, and is going to make every effort to receive you badly: but I answer to you, myself, that all these apparent marks of hatred are in fact just so many real proofs of her love for you.

LUCINDE, *still without looking at Léandre.*

On that footing, he ought to regard himself as very favored, I assure you; the poor half-wit!

ANGÉLIQUE.

Come on, Lucinde, must anger keep you from looking at people?

LÉANDRE.

If my love excites your hatred, know how criminal I am.

He throws himself at Lucinde's feet.

LUCINDE.

Ah! Cléonte! Ah! Wicked Angélique!

LÉANDRE.

Léandre has displeased you too much for me to dare, under that name, to avail myself of the favors I have received under that of Cléonte. But if the motive for my disguise can justify its result, you will pardon it as the scruple of a heart whose weak point is to want to be loved for itself.

LUCINDE.

Get up, Léandre; an excess of scruples offends only those hearts that lack them, and mine is as satisfied with the test as yours must be with the success. But are you, Angélique, cruel enough to amuse yourself with my pains?

ANGÉLIQUE.

Truly, it's a fine thing for you to complain! Alas! You are both happy, while I am prey to alarms.

LÉANDRE.

What! My dear sister, you have been considering my happiness, even while you have anxieties about your own? Ah! This is a kindness that I shall never forget.

He kisses her hand.

SCENE XVII.
LÉANDRE, VALÉRE, ANGÉLIQUE, LUCINDE, MARTON.

VALÉRE.

Don't let my presence bother you at all. What Mademoiselle? I did not know all your conquests nor the lucky object of your preference, and, out of humility, I shall take care to remind myself that, after having sighed the most constantly, Valére has been treated the worst.

ANGÉLIQUE.

That would be better done than you think, and indeed you need some lessons in modesty.

VALÉRE.

What! You dare to join raillery to insult, and you have the effrontery to applaud yourself when you ought to be dying of shame?

ANGÉLIQUE.

Ah! You are getting angry; I leave you; I do not like insults.

VALÉRE.

No, you will stay; I must enjoy all your shame.

ANGÉLIQUE.

Well then, enjoy.

VALÉRE.

For, I hope that you will not have the boldness to attempt your justification.

ANGÉLIQUE.

Don't be afraid of that.

VALÉRE.

And don't flatter yourself that I still preserve the slightest feelings in your favor.

ANGÉLIQUE.

My opinion about that will not change the thing at all.

VALÉRE.

I declare to you that I do not intend to have anything but hatred for you.

ANGÉLIQUE.

That's extremely well done.

VALÉRE, *taking out the portrait.*

And henceforth this is the sole object of all my love.

ANGÉLIQUE.

You are right. And I, I declare that I have for this Gentleman *(Showing her brother.)* an attachment that is hardly inferior to yours for the original of that portrait.

VALÉRE.

Ungrateful one! Alas, there is nothing left for me to do but die!

ANGÉLIQUE.

Valére, listen. I pity the condition in which I see you. You ought to agree that you are the most unjust of men to get worked up over an appearance of infidelity the example of which you have set for me yourself; but today my kindness wants very much to put your failings behind it.

VALÉRE.

You will see whether anyone will do me the favor of forgiving me!

ANGÉLIQUE.

In truth, you hardly deserve it. Nevertheless I am going to teach you at what price I can resolve to do it. Formerly you have borne witness to me of feelings that I have repaid with a return too tender for an ingrate. In spite of that, you have undeservedly insulted me with a preposterous love conceived on a simple portrait with all the flightiness and, I dare to say, all the giddiness of your age and your character. It is not time to examine whether I ought to have imitated you, and it is not up to you—who are the guilty one—to blame my behavior.

VALÉRE.

It is not up to me, great gods! But let's see where this fine speech is leading.

ANGÉLIQUE.

Here. I have told you that I am acquainted with the object of your new love, and that is true. I added that I loved it tenderly, and that is still only too true. By admitting its merit to you, I have not at all disguised its faults from you. I have done more, I have promised you to make you acquainted with it, and now I give you my word to do so as early as today, as early as this very hour: for I warn you that it is closer to you than you think.

VALÉRE.

What do I understand, what, the . . .

ANGÉLIQUE.

Don't interrupt me at all, I beg you. Finally, the truth forces me again to repeat to you that this person loves you ardently, and I can answer to you for this person's attachment as for my own. Now it is up to you to choose between this person and me, the one for whom you destine all your tenderness: choose, Knight; but choose from this instant and irreversibly.

MARTON.

My faith, see how perplexed he is. The choice is pleasant. Believe me, Sir, choose the portrait; that is the way to be protected from rivals.

LUCINDE.

Ah! Valére, must you[9] hesitate so long to follow the impressions of your heart?

VALÉRE, *at Angélique's feet and casting aside the portrait.*

It is done; you have won, beautiful Angélique, and I feel how inferior the feelings born out of caprice are to those that you inspire in me. *(Marton picks up the portrait.)* But, alas! When all my heart returns to you, can I flatter myself that it will bring back yours to me?

ANGÉLIQUE.

You will be able to judge my acknowledgment by the sacrifice you just made to me. Get up, Valére, and consider these features well.

LÉANDRE, *also looking.*

Wait a minute! But I believe I recognize this object . . . it is . . . yes, by my faith, it's him. . . .

VALÉRE.

What do you mean him? Say rather her. It is a woman whom I renounce as I do all the women of the universe, over whom Angélique will always prevail.

ANGÉLIQUE.

Yes, Valére; it was a woman up to now: but I hope that it will be a man from now on, superior to these little weaknesses that degrade his sex and his character.

VALÉRE.

Into what a strange state of surprise you are throwing me!

ANGÉLIQUE.

You should be all the less unacquainted with this object since you have had the most intimate commerce with it, and since assuredly you will not be accused of having neglected it. Remove from this head that alien attire that your sister had added to it. . . .

VALÉRE.

Ah! What am I seeing?

MARTON.

Isn't the thing clear? You see the portrait and here is the original.

VALÉRE.

Oh heavens! and I am not dying of shame!

MARTON.

Ah, Sir, you are perhaps the only one of your order who knew what shame is.

ANGÉLIQUE.

Ingrate! Was I wrong to tell you that I loved the original of this portrait?

VALÉRE.

And I intend to love it only because it adores you.

ANGÉLIQUE.

To solidify our reconciliation please let me present to you my brother Léandre.

LÉANDRE.

Allow, Sir . . .

VALÉRE.

Gods! What height of felicity! What! Even when I was an ingrate, Angélique was not unfaithful?

LUCINDE.

How much do I share your happiness! And how much my own is even increased by it!

SCENE XVIII.

LISIMON, *the Actors of the preceding scene.*

LISIMON.

Ah! Here you are very conveniently gathered together here. Since Valére and Lucinde both resisted their marriages, I had at first resolved to constrain them. But I have reflected that sometimes one must be a good father, and that violence does not always make for happy marriages. I have, then, made the decision to break off today everything that had been decreed; and here are the new arrangements that I am substituting for them. Angélique will marry me: Lucinde will enter a convent: Valére will be disinherited; and as for you, Léandre, you will have to be patient, if you please.

MARTON.

Extremely well done, by my faith! That's measuring it out, one could not do better.

LISIMON.

What's the matter, then? You are all bewildered! Doesn't this plan suit you?

MARTON.

See whether any one of them can unclench his teeth! Plague on foolish lovers and foolish young people whose useless babble never dries up, and who cannot find a word in a necessary occasion!

LISIMON.

Come then, you all know my intentions; you have only to comply with them.

LÉANDRE.

Ah, Sir! Deign to suspend your wrath. Don't you read the repentance of the guilty ones in their eyes and in their perplexity, and do you want to mix up the innocent ones in the same punishment?

LISIMON.

Now then, I intend to be weak enough to test their obedience one more time. Let's see a little. Well then, M. Valére, are you still making reflections?

VALÉRE.

Yes, father; but in place of the pains of marriage, they no longer offer me anything but the pleasures.

LISIMON.

Oh, oh! You have very much changed your tune! And you, Lucinde, do you still love your liberty very much?

LUCINDE.

I feel, father, that it can be sweet to lose it under the laws of duty.

LISIMON.

Ah! Now they are all reasonable. I am charmed by it. Embrace me, my children, and let's go conclude these happy weddings. A stroke of authority falls very conveniently!

VALÉRE.

Come, fair Angélique, you have cured me of a ridiculousness that was the shame of my youth, and from now on I am going to prove with you that when one loves well, one no longer considers oneself.

The Death of Lucretia

Tragedy

Fragments (2 Acts)

CHARACTERS

LUCRETIA
COLLATINUS, HUSBAND OF LUCRETIA.
LUCRETIUS, FATHER OF LUCRETIA.
SEXTUS, SON OF TARQUIN.
BRUTUS.
PAULINE, LUCRETIA'S CONFIDANTE.
SULPITIUS, SEXTUS'S CONFIDANT.

The setting is Rome.

[ACT I.

SCENE I.
LUCRETIA, PAULINE.]

LUCRETIA.

Day is about to break; go, Pauline, prepare the purple dye and the linen so we can get back to work.

PAULINE.

But Madam, in your shaken state you need rest more than work; and I don't know what to think of the extraordinary agitation I've seen you in for the last two days.

LUCRETIA.

I admit to you that I feel tormented by a hidden anxiety whose cause is unknown to me. A somber terror frightens me; sleep eludes me; and when my eyes become heavy, dreadful dreams jolt me awake and plunge

me back into my fear. I don't know if it is my health declining; I don't know if it is forebodings that threaten me and, without being guilty, I believe I would feel remorse were my whole consolation not to be to turn inward to the depths of my heart.

PAULINE.

Lucretia, remorse! If an excess of the most severe virtue could give it, you would doubtless have it.

LUCRETIA.

Believe me, Pauline, virtues never have excesses, and anyone who had them all would never be accused of having too many.

PAULINE.

What name might I give this excessive reserve, this austere humor, that imprisons you in your house; which, in order to keep dangerous company from you, deprives you of that of honest people and which, in a word, removes the example of your virtues from the Roman people and the homage of everyone's heart from your appealing traits?

LUCRETIA.

Do you call the pleasure of living peacefully in the bosom of one's family a prison? As for me, I shall never need any other company for my happiness nor any other esteem for my glory than that of my Spouse, my Father, and my Children.

PAULINE.

But in hiding thus your charms and virtues, you lose the means of extending their rights; and you forget that it pertains to the graces to teach wisdom with profit.

LUCRETIA.

If my friendship means anything to you, drop this tone that will eventually remove it from you. I've told you a hundred times, my first duty is toward myself; the only lesson suitable for me to give is the example of an honest life; and I have always believed that the woman most worthy of esteem is the one least spoken of, even were it to be praised. May the Gods keep my name from ever becoming famous: this fatal fame is purchased by our sex only at the expense of happiness or innocence.

PAULINE.

If my zeal has possibly displeased you, at least do not blame its motives. I would like to see you live in a more pleasant fashion. By means

of a little company, fun, and relaxation, I would like to bring back your health, prey to a sudden melancholy; and, if I dare say so, your glory itself would only be improved.

LUCRETIA.

My glory? Explain yourself; I do not understand you at all.

PAULINE.

Will you forgive me for a sincerity that I owe you? Rome beheld with approval your first intended. All the wishes of the People, as well as Tarquinius's choice, united you to his successor. Who other, they said, than the heir to the Crown would be worthy of possessing Lucretia? Let her occupy a Throne she will make honorable; she must bring[1] about Sextus's happiness so that he learns to bring about that of the Romans. Everything changed, to the Prince's great disappointment, against the King's will, the People's, and it would be to offend reason to doubt that it were not also against yours. The unyielding Lucretius[2] broke off a marriage which should have been among his most ardent wishes. A Roman of the Middle Classes obtained the prize to which he who is to be its sovereign hardly dared aspire.[3] I abandon a comparison which might offend your scruples,[4] but it is impossible that in spite of yourself you not feel which one most deserved to please you.[5]

LUCRETIA.

Be mindful that you are speaking to the wife of Collatinus, and that since he is my Spouse, he was the one most worthy of being so.

PAULINE.

About that, I ought to think only what you prescribe to me;[6] but the public, jealous of the only freedom it still has and whose judgments are feared by its very masters,[7] has not given the same approval to Lucretius's choice as you. How can one not be difficult about the merit of anyone who would dare to claim Lucretia? In all respects, Collatinus was found less pardonable concerning that than Sextus, and the people believes itself too good a judge of true merit to doubt that you think[8] otherwise than it on this point.

LUCRETIA.

How badly the people consults its true interests in meting out its esteem and its scorn![9] The Romans admire in Sextus the brilliant qualities that will one day cause them misfortunes and disdain in Collatinus the humanity and the sweet and moderate passions that would have made a vulgar court attendant, were he the son of Tarquinius, the best

of all Princes. As for me, it is certain that the constant and peaceful love of Collatinus makes me happy and that the tempestuous fits of Sextus would never have made him anything but a bad Husband. But what do all these discourses have to do with my taste for seclusion?

PAULINE.

Very well, Madam, since this must come to an end, I fear that the purity of your glory will suffer more from this excessive reserve than it would from the contrary excess and that if this desire for such a secluded life[10] is not attributed more to sorrow for the spouse you have lost than to love for the one you possess, it will at least be regarded as a precaution that is more injurious to your heart than necessary to your virtue.[11]

LUCRETIA.

Do you think that when these suspicions exist, a reasonable and wise woman should regulate her conduct according to the vain discourses of the People and that according to such chimerical interpretations . . . I notice a stranger! . . . By the Gods, what do I see?

PAULINE.

It is Sulpitius, one of the Prince's freedmen.

LUCRETIA.

Sextus's! What does this man come to do here?[12]

SCENE II.
[LUCRETIA, PAULINE, SULPITIUS.]

SULPITIUS.

To alert you, Madam, to the impending arrival of the Prince and your Spouse[13] and to give you a Letter from him.

LUCRETIA.

From whom?

SULPITIUS.

From Collatinus.

LUCRETIA.

Give, right away.

(Aside, after having read.)

By the Gods! (*To Pauline.*) Read.

PAULINE, *reads.*

The King has just left on a twenty-four-hour unexpected trip, which leaves me the leisure to come see you;[14] it is not necessary to add that I am taking advantage of it, but it is necessary to alert you that the Prince wished[15] to accompany me. So have a suitable lodging prepared for him and be mindful in receiving the heir of the Crown that upon him the fortune of your Spouse depends.

LUCRETIA, *to Pauline.*

Do what is necessary to receive the Prince; you will tell[16] Collatinus it is with regret that I do not better second his intentions and, in speaking to him of the shaken state you have seen me in for the last two days, add that my disturbed health leaves me no strength to obey his orders myself or[17] to see anyone but him.[18]

SCENE III.
[PAULINE, SULPITIUS.]

SULPITIUS.

Well, now, Pauline! What do you make of Lucretia's dismay over the news of the Prince's arrival and whence do you think so many worries would come to her if not from her own heart?

PAULINE.

I greatly fear we have been too eager to judge Lucretia. Believe me, Sulpitius, this is not a soul to be measured according to ours. You know that when I entered her service,[19] I thought like you with respect to her secret[20] inclinations and that in harmony with her own heart, as I hope, I was confident I could easily favor the Prince's desires.[21] Looking at it more closely, I have quite changed my opinion. Since having become acquainted with this sweet and sensitive, but virtuous and steadfast, character I have become convinced that Lucretia, fully the mistress of her heart and passions, is capable of loving nothing but her spouse and duty.

SULPITIUS.

Will you always be the dupe of these lofty words and never understand that duty and virtue are terms void of meaning in which no one believes, but in which each one would have the rest of the world believe?[22] Think: however Lucretia may appear to you, she would never be able to love her duty more than she loves her happiness; and I am quite deceived[23] if she can ever find it other than in fulfilling that of Sextus.

PAULINE.

I believe I know something about feelings and you, more than anyone, can[24] accord me justice in this regard. I have plumbed hers with a carefulness proportionate[25] to the interest taken by the Prince who employs us and with all the skill necessary so as not to become suspected[26] in any way by Lucretia. I have exposed her heart to the surest tests, against which the most dissimulated reserve[27] is least guarded; one time, I scolded her for what she had lost; another time, I praised her for what she had preferred; one time flattering her vanity, another time offending her amour-propre, I tried to arouse her jealousy,[28] her tenderness, or at least her curiosity. And whenever it has been a question of Sextus I have always found her as tranquil as about any other subject and always equally ready to continue or end the conversation without any appearance of pleasure or pain.

SULPITIUS.

Then, in spite of all the tenderness you flatter me for, my heart must know more about love than yours: for I have seen more of it in the instant in which I just observed Lucretia than you during the six months you have been in her service, and the emotion the mere name of Sextus arouses in her[29] lets me judge the one his appearance must arouse in her.[30]

PAULINE.

Her health has been so altered for the last two days that her Mind is affected, and her very listlessness may well have produced the effect you attribute to Collatinus's letter.[31] Too much credulity may deceive me, I admit;[32] but then might not too much insight deceive you?[33]

SULPITIUS.

We ought at least desire that my eyes are better than yours and foment and ignite a love on which the happiness of the one who is to unite us depends.[34] You know that the Prince's[35] promises are at the price of the success of our efforts; moreover, you are not unaware that in our condition the vices of our masters serve us as steps for arriving at fortune and that it is in arousing their passions that we manage to satisfy our own. We would be lost if they were wise enough to get along without the secret services by which we ensnare them. Thus it is that in turn one makes oneself necessary to those upon whom one depends and the greatest misfortune that could befall an ambitious Court Attendant would be to serve a reasonable and just prince who loved only his duty.

PAULINE.

I agree with all that,[36] but the interest we have in profiting from the error of others in no way obliges us to deceive ourselves; and the advantage we ought to derive from Lucretia's faults is no reason to hope she commits them. Besides, I will admit to you that after having seen this lovable and virtuous woman up close, I find myself less suited than I thought[37] for seconding the Prince's designs. I believed I had only to combat a ferocious virtue that I detested from the outset; but her sweetness so excuses her wisdom that after having taken note of[38] the charms of her character, one forgives those of her person and loses the courage as well as the will to soil so pure a soul.

SULPITIUS.

Given our situation, this studied language is not very suitable to me: our interests are too linked for us to need to resort to ruses with one another. The Prince asks you for a secret meeting, and you will soon be able to employ with him the tricks that appear to you most suited for making him value your services; but I who know your heart and who am content to possess it such as it is, I do not approve that in a matter like this, upon which the fate of both of us depends, you make such an unseemly pretense of displaying to me more delicateness than reason.

PAULINE.

How unjust your reproaches are and how badly you have understood me! The more I cherish the hand you offer me, the less I want the honor of obtaining it to cost me that of deserving it. But mark that I in no way seek to vaunt myself and that if I dissimulate anything from you, it is rather my scruples than my hopes. I shall continue to serve Sextus as you insist and it shall not be my fault if it is not successfully. But would not promising you more of an outcome from all of my efforts than I expect, myself, be to deceive you? Farewell; time flies; I must go carry out the orders I have just received.[39] When the Prince has come, I will be sure to alert you the first instant when I can see him in secret.[40]

SCENE IV.

SULPITIUS.

How I hate these indecisive characters who never know how to direct themselves by reason and are good or bad only because they are weak! Her pusillanimous mind is as removed from the maxims that lead to great things as her rank and fortune are beneath my pretensions and

hopes. But I must flatter her with a chimerical union until, with her help, Lucretia seduced and Sextus satisfied, leave, so to speak, at my discretion the choice of my rewards. . . . I hear the noise of Horses! . . . Would it be the Prince already? . . . By the Gods! what do I see? Lucretia's Father and Brutus? Let me run to head off my Master and alert him to this Upset.

SCENE V.
BRUTUS, LUCRETIUS.

BRUTUS.
Do you know who that man is we just passed?

LUCRETIUS.
His face is not unknown to me.

BRUTUS.
He is one of Sextus's freedmen.

LUCRETIUS.
Sextus's! What does he come to do in this castle?

BRUTUS.
You are not unaware either of the former attachment his master had for your daughter nor of the ties he seeks to form with her Spouse; you know, moreover, that he is the King's son, and you ask what he wants?

LUCRETIUS.
To bring the crimes of his Household into my family? Oh Brutus! . . .

BRUTUS.
I can tell you more, for it is now time to hide nothing from you. Namely, Lucretia loves Sextus.

LUCRETIUS.
Him! My daughter? What are you saying, unfortunate one!

BRUTUS.
Calm yourself, worthy and blessed Father and recognize the Treasure the Gods have given you. Yes, the son of Tarquinius is adored by your daughter; but do you know that this hidden sentiment, discerned by me alone, is no less unknown to the one who undergoes it than to the Tyrant

who is its object; do you know that the discovery of this fatal secret would cost this chaste and respectable woman her life; do you know what prodigies of strength and virtue this involuntary love, subjugated without being known, produces in her great soul? Learn that passions to be conquered are a more powerful spur to heroic Souls than cold lessons of wisdom which, finding no obstacle, acquire no strength through resistance; learn, you, whose virtue has never been altered by anything, that from the bosom of our repressed desires arises this generous pride that teaches us to scorn the weaknesses of others after having triumphed over our own. It is by this very aspect that alarms you that your daughter is most worthy of all our trust; let us dare to declare our plans to her and the Tarquinians are lost, for Sextus is loved.

LUCRETIUS.

Brutus, let us speak softly and in no way expose these great secrets to indiscreet ears. We shall finish this conversation when we have leisure. I shall go in to my daughter and tell her only what is necessary. You, go head off Collatinus and prepare his mind for the great things that we have to say to him.

SCENE VI.

BRUTUS.

Tutelary Gods of Rome! the moment draws near in which your auspices are going to be justified. It is too much to bear that Tyrants dare usurp your rights and dishonor your finest work. It is time to show servile nations a People of men: it is time to teach the universe what the love of liberty can do with generous souls for the progress of Virtue!

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II

SCENE I.
[SULPITIUS, SEXTUS.]

SULPITIUS.

There, My Lord, is the entrance to Lucretia's apartment; this door leads to Pauline's quarters, and it is in this place that she is to alert me the first moment she can speak with you secretly.

SEXTUS.

Here, then, is the blessed domicile of all that Rome and the world contain of charm and virtue. How my agitation doubles as I approach her dwelling! I would approach that of the Gods with more assurance and I cannot understand, in comparing my rapture with my fright, how the same heart can bring together such burning desire with such timidity.

SULPITIUS.

The explanation is not difficult: doubt of success alone causes all your terror, and you would soon cease to fear Lucretia were you willing to entrust yourself a little more to Sulpitius.

SEXTUS.

Friend, you read poorly into this heart you want to reassure; see whether I recognize your zeal; see how far I am able to let my confidence in you extend. On your word, I undertake the seduction of the most chaste woman; I prefer to believe that Lucretia lacks virtue than suspect you of fooling me with vain hopes. Alas, so as not to die of despair, I must indeed flatter myself with these chimeras. But acquaint yourself with all the perplexity of your unfortunate friend. Be mindful of the promptings of shame and horror that arise in me when I think that Sextus's worthiest exploit will be to corrupt by tricks an innocent and pure soul he could not reach by attentiveness. Be mindful of the scorn this unfortunate woman will have for me when she knows of the shameful means I have used to seduce her. Be mindful of the eternal tears the loss of her innocence will perhaps cost her, of the just curses she will one day heap upon the one who ravished it from her. Be mindful of the wretched misery that will follow the transitory happiness your pity prepares for me. Idolatrous with love for Lucretia, I wanted to harm her entire soul. Love, esteem, confidence, friendship—her heart is not susceptible to a sentiment mine is not furiously jealous of. Alas, in possessing her I shall still be quite far from the supreme happiness I formed a ravishing idea of for myself. Ah, Sulpitius, when you have given me Lucretia, tell me, what will you do to make me happy?

SULPITIUS.

Sire, if you love her, what more do you need than to be loved by her? Allow me to say it: this language is not yet appropriate; in your discourse, I find more the jealous worries of a gratified lover than the ardent desires of a heart that aspires to be so; and all these refined sentiments are hardly to be imagined in the rapture of genuine passion.

SEXTUS.

Imprudent man, were you acquainted with my passion, you would keep yourself from using this language with me. Ah, if the hope you flatter me with were ever to be extinguished, fear learning what fury my heart is capable of, fear lest your days and mine be the least sacrifice my disappointed arm could make of my rage.

SULPITIUS.

Calm this enthusiasm and bear in mind where you are. I repeat: you will be happy if you want to be so; but Lucretia's heart is the least obstacle you have to overcome. Her pride, which will defend her against you and herself, is not yet your most dangerous enemy. You must be most wary of yourself, of this indiscreet rapture that can slip out; only in covering your plans with the deepest mystery can you hope to get her to approve them. With a woman so sensitive to honor, all of your adroitness must be in bending hers; and if she is ever sure of secrecy, you will soon be sure of her heart.

SEXTUS.

Friend, take pity on my perplexity and forgive my foolish discourse, but count upon my docility for all of your advice; you see me inebriated with love to the point that I am no longer capable of guiding myself. Lucretia is always at the core of my heart and before my eyes; I hear her sweet voice; her heavenly glance is turned upon me; mine can see only her; my existence is entirely and solely in her; I live only to adore her and all the powers of my soul alienated from every other object hardly suffice for the feelings that consume me. So make up for this self-forgetfulness; guide your blind master's steps and act so that with my happiness I owe you the return of my lost reason.

SULPITIUS.

Be mindful that we have more than one sort of precaution to take here and that the arrival of Lucretia's Father ought to make us even more circumspect. Again,[41] I suspect this voyage with Brutus covers over some mystery; and from the way they were watching us, I believe I saw that they feared being watched themselves. I do not know[42] what is being secretly concocted, but Lucretius looks unkindly upon us and I admit to you that this Brutus has always displeased me.[43]

SEXTUS.

Ah, what do we have to fear from the vain mutterings of an old man and the plans of a fool?

SULPITIUS.

This fool knows, nonetheless, how to make himself the darling of the Romans and to hold his own at the court, while this old man is the governor of Rome and—even more—the Father of Lucretia.

SCENE II.
A SLAVE, SEXTUS, SULPITIUS.

THE SLAVE.

Sire, Pauline is waiting for you.

SEXTUS.

Let us go learn if I am permitted to live.

SULPITIUS.

I see Brutus and Lucretius; let us avoid being noticed by them.

SCENE III.
BRUTUS, LUCRETIUS.

LUCRETIUS.

Did I not just see two men quickly slip into Pauline's quarters?

BRUTUS.

I saw them just as you did. It is the Tyrant and his satellite.

LUCRETIUS.

What, even under my eyes . . .

BRUTUS.

Let them rush to their ruin, and be mindful of Collatinus who follows us.

SCENE IV.
LUCRETIUS, BRUTUS, COLLATINUS.

LUCRETIUS.

Stop, Collatinus; you will see your spouse in due time, but it will not always be the moment to avenge your affronts and hers.

COLLATINUS.

Our affronts! what am I to understand . . . ?

LUCRETIUS.

What, had you a more sensitive heart or a less blind ambition, you would not have been unaware of for such a long while.

COLLATINUS.

I still do not understand you at all.

LUCRETIUS.

Imprudent man: for what design do you think an impetuous man feigns to knit with you a friendship his equals have never known? Imagine, if you can, the indignation that seizes me when I see my daughter's spouse himself bring into his house the enemy who wants to dishonor her.

COLLATINUS.

I cannot suspect the Prince of forming foolish plans and if he would do so, who ought to scorn them more than I? May the Heavens keep me from so offending the wife the Gods and you have given me as to believe I ought to add my prudential concerns to those of her virtue! It is enough for me to be acquainted with Lucretia; what do the sentiments of Sextus matter to me?

LUCRETIUS.

What do they matter to you? Do not deceive yourself, Collatinus. The very respect you owe your Spouse obliges you to avenge or forestall any sentiment that offends her. Learn that a chaste woman ought to hear only the discourse of which she can approve and that with respect to her a planned undertaking is necessarily an affront received.

COLLATINUS.

Tell me, then, what I ought to do to become acquainted with, stop, or punish the designs of Sextus.

BRUTUS.

Oh, Collatinus! Tyrants punish as soon as they suspect; they are therefore guilty as soon as they are suspect. Lucretia's Beauty; Sextus's former love [for her]; his poorly disguised vices; and, above all, the maxims of his equals are, along with his trip here, proofs of his criminal intentions which will soon furnish you more evident ones if you want to look for them. At this very instant Sextus is in Pauline's quarters; I shall let you imagine for yourself the purpose of their secret conversation. As for the

remedy, it is sure, unique, and depends on a single word. Do you know how to be a man and would you know how to die?

COLLATINUS.

Yes, without doubt, I shall know how to die; but in consulting wisdom and in following my duty.

LUCRETIUS.

Well, then, let yourself be led by a tender Father who loves you and by his friend who wants to hold you in esteem. You will do your duty, for you are a Roman; and it will be wise for you to see to your safety, for as concerns the husband of a woman a Tyrant loves, there never is any. Often, so as better to preserve one's life, one must know how to stand up to death.

COLLATINUS.

Hurry up and explain yourself.

BRUTUS.

Listen. The Gods wanted Rome to bear the yoke of servitude once so as to learn to recognize it and consequently to detest it. Our trial suffices henceforth; we abhor our chains as much as is possible; thus, it is time to break them. All of Rome speaks to you here through my mouth: either we shall all perish or we shall destroy the monster who devours us. But the measures we have taken are so certain that instead of the risk of the undertaking all that remains for you is to share in the glory of success. So choose either to see yourself scorned by the Tyrant, dishonored by his son, a slave of the one and the other, and a companion of their unhappiness or, with us, to avenge your fatherland, your spouse, yourself; to be virtuous, free, and, to say it all in a word, a worthy spouse of Lucretia, a worthy son of her virtuous Father, a friend of Brutus, and a citizen of Rome.

COLLATINUS.

You astonish me, without frightening me; but before I decide, let me ask you to shed some needed light. In preparing such a great undertaking, you must have foreseen all the difficulties. Therefore, I want to believe that in spite of so many obstacles, Tarquinius's vigilance, and the terrifying power of whoever disposes of the public forces you will overthrow the usurper and destroy arbitrary power. But what will you do afterward for Rome and for us? Shall we leave our fellow citizens prey to

anarchy, shall we sacrifice the Fatherland to revenge or, delivered from a Master whose power we share, shall we, as the prize for our good deeds become slaves of the Multitude?

LUCRETIUS.

I understand you; you prefer slavery to equality, and for you to serve tyrants is less harsh than ruling over the People is appealing. Son, renounce this childish ambition that offers you only a doubtful authority in exchange for certain chains. Do you not see that if the reputation of great people makes them apparently share absolute power, its weight is really heavier for them than for the small people? Only taxes are requested of the People; to that extent, it is free: but the freedom, fortune, and life of all those who draw near to the Tyrant are constantly in peril. The ferocity of his caprices falls mainly upon what catches his eye; were you today his most cherished favorite, tomorrow you might perhaps be his least slave.

COLLATINUS.

I am grateful for your confidence and touched by your tenderness; but in thinking of ourselves alone, do you mean to forget the Fatherland? Be mindful of the horrors of civil War, of the danger of being without a leader, of the license of an enraged populace. Rome will perish by its independence or will only change masters; and without softening her fate you will cause her more evil in a single moment than Tyranny would have been able to do in a great number of years.

BRUTUS.

Young man, leave this error aside. Rome's constitution, stronger than its Tyrants, has made it free from its birth on. We have the Comitia,[44] a senate and Laws that draw their authority from themselves. Our government is ready-made, formed, and to make it wise it is necessary only to take away what it has too much of. Thank heaven we are not like those effeminate people for whom, everything existing only by the will of Kings, everything perishes as soon as they are no longer, for lack of a legitimate and independent authority. Were the Tyrant to fall today, tomorrow Rome would be tranquil, submitted to laws, and have lost only one enemy. Friends, time presses, and discussions are untimely when there are not two sides to choose from. We have consulted as to her needs and our hearts; reason has confirmed it, and the event is sure. It is not in any way for ourselves but for you that we are speaking here. Know that perhaps tomorrow she will number among her children only liberators and those who have been banished.

COLLATINUS.

Oh, Brutus, your voice stirs my soul and I feel pierced through by the celestial fire that shines in your eyes. Yes, let Rome be free! What power can resist your zeal and what cowardly heart would hesitate to share in it? But, Friend, see the core of my own. Is it necessary to renounce . . .

BRUTUS, *embracing him and shaking his hand.*

Believe me, Collatinus, believe in Brutus's soul—one at least as proud as your own. It is greater and finer to be counted among free men, even in the last rank, than to be first in Tarquinius's court.

COLLATINUS.

Ah, what a difference between us. Your greatness is entirely at the core of your soul and I need to seek mine in fortune.

LUCRETIUS.

Well, now, do we not need leaders? Son, you will rule over Romans, you will ensure that law reigns, and in the end you will raise yourself to the point of knowing how to obey and to become our equal.

COLLATINUS.

I give in and want only to obey you.

BRUTUS.

That is enough. Rome has your faith. We will come back to this conversation at greater leisure. (*Aside, to Lucretius*) Your son-in-law is ambitious, weak, and not very clever. We are lost if you let him out of your sight. Follow him and leave the rest up to me.

[FRAGMENTS].

[1]
[SEXTUS, LUCRETIA, PAULINE.]

[SEXTUS.]

Do not flee, Madam; do not so insult the respect you inspire in me; deign to listen to me for an instant. I promise to go away as soon as you order; and if during this conversation a single word that offends you slips out, I swear by the Gods, by my honor, and by yourself, that I shall never in my life appear again to your eyes.

[LUCRETIA.]

Speak, sire, I am listening to you. (*Aside, to Pauline.*) Run immediately and look for my Father or my Spouse.

[SEXTUS.]

Oh Lucretia, you upon whom heaven has made Sextus's and perhaps Rome's fate depend, let me unveil to you a heart made for virtue, that loves it, wants to follow it, but cannot do so without your help. I shall in no way attempt to hide from you the secret impulse of my soul; you know too well the sweet hope whose charm it felt. Alas, it is in vain that this hope is no more; of what effect would be my efforts to lose the memory of it? The Gods themselves could not destroy its fatal imprint. At least I shall know how to repress the least sign of it. I shall suffer doubtlessly, but in silence; and it is from your virtues alone that my will shall receive laws. I shall say even more: vice is in my heart; I feel it and admit it with trembling. But you make me love innocence and purity; in you, I adore their celestial image; and if, far from your eyes, my imagination wanders away in recollecting your charms, their presence calms my furious passions while doubling my rapture and your touching and modest glances bring me back to virtue.

[2]

[BRUTUS, *to Lucretius.*]

Respectable old man, that is your first imprudent act, but it is devastating. A victim of prejudice, you have preferred to confide in your son-in-law rather than in your daughter without bearing in mind that he is only a woman and she is more than a man. Let us by means of diligence repair the danger of our indiscretion and may the sun rise tomorrow on a free Rome. I am impatient to see Lucretia; I do not know what voice cries out to me from the core of my heart that she is the one who is to break our chains. It is undoubtedly suitable that freedom come to life under the auspices of virtue. By the Gods! It's the Tyrant; I must restrain myself. Oh cowardly and vile feigning, of all the sacrifices the fatherland requires, this is the only one that pains my soul.

[3]

Our hearts have a great deal of difficulty in loving it[45] when it is pure, brilliant, and still adorned with all its charms; will we be more faithful to it when the stains it receives have disposed us to regret it less?

[4]

Pauline, be mindful that I am the wife of Collatinus and that it was thus better for me to wed him.

[5]

Useless virtue, you serve only to double my pain and without you I would less cruelly feel all the horrors of opprobrium.

[6]

The Father of the Gods himself takes pleasure in the homage of mortals only because they are in no way forced to accord it to him.

[7]

I am convinced that the woman most worthy of esteem is the one least spoken of.

[8]

The Virtuous Sextus strives to corrupt the wife of his friend.

[9]

What do I have to fear from a love that can contribute to my fortune without being able to harm my honor?

[10]

Be the worthy instrument of Rome's freedom and, to say perhaps even more, be worthy of yourself above all.

[11]

Well, Brutus, I have done my duty; do Rome's and your own.

[12]

And to say it all in a word, let us, if it is possible, be worthy of being Lucretia's avengers.

[13][46]

LUCRETIA, *alone.*

Cruel virtue, what reward do you offer us that might be worthy of the

sacrifices you cost us! Reason may lead me astray in my pursuit of you; but my heart cries out to me that it is necessary to follow you, and I shall follow you to the end.

[14]
LUCRETIA, PAULINE.

LUCRETIA.

Is it not better that a wicked man die, that my father be obeyed, and that the fatherland be free, than that, due to pity, Lucretia forget her virtue?

. . . . . .

LUCRETIA, *going back in.*

(To Pauline, in a cold but somewhat altered tone.) Help this unfortunate man.

[15]

SEXTUS, *alone.*

I do not know what blessed[47] image incessantly arises between her and me. In her eyes that are so sweet I believe I see a god who terrifies me; and in the struggles I undergo upon seeing her, I feel that her modesty is no less celestial than her beauty.

[16]

SEXTUS, *alone.*

Oh Lucretia! Oh celestial beauty, charm and painful burden of my villainous heart! Oh virtue worthy of being adored by the gods, yet is sullied by the vilest among mortals!

[17]

LUCRETIA.

Just heavens! a dead man! Alas, he suffers no more; his soul is peaceful. Thus within two hours . . . Oh innocence, where is your reward? Oh, human life, where is your happiness? . . . Tender and unhappy father! . . . And you who called me your spouse! . . . Ah, I was, however, virtuous . . .

[18]

LUCRETIA.

Monster! if I expire by your furious anger, my life is only a new heinous deed for you; and your villainous hand knows how to punish the crime only after having shared in it.

The Gallant Muses.

Ballet.

FOREWORD.

This work is so mediocre in its genre, and its genre is so bad, that to understand how it could have pleased me, it is necessary to feel all the force of habit and of prejudices. Nourished from my infancy in the taste of French Music and of the sort of Poetry that is suited to it, I took noise for harmony, the marvelous for the interesting, and songs for an Opera.

While working on this one I thought only of giving myself words suited for deploying the three characters of music with which I was occupied; with this design I chose Hesiod for the elevated and strong genre, Ovid for the tender, Anacreon for the gay. This Plan would not have been bad if I could have fulfilled it better.

Nevertheless although the Music for this Piece might be worth hardly any more than the Poetry, one does not fail to find in it from time to time bits full of warmth and of life. The work was performed several times with success enough, namely in 1745 before M. the Duc de Richelieu who intended it for the Court, in 1747 at the theater of the Opéra, and in 1761 in front of M. the Prince de Conti. It was even at the performance of some bits that I had rehearsed at the home of M. de la Popeliniere that M. Rameau who heard them conceived against me that violent hatred, marks of which he did not cease giving until his death.[1]

PROLOGUE.

The theater represents Mount Parnassus;
Apollo appears there on his Throne,
and the Muses are seated around him.

SCENE I.

APOLLO AND THE MUSES.

Rise up divine Spirits, rise up famous Heroes
Shine through the fine arts, shine through victory

Be worthy of being admitted to the Temple of Memory:
We reserve to your glory
A prize worthy of your labors.

APOLLO.
Muses, daughters of Heaven, how pure is your glory!
How sweet your pleasures!
The most beautiful gifts of nature
Are less brilliant than those that come from you.
On this peaceful mountain, far from noise and arms
You taste the sweetness of innocent pleasures.
Neither proud ambition, love, nor its false charms
Disturb your Hearts at all.

THE MUSES.
No, no, neither love nor its false charms
Will ever disturb our hearts.

One hears an alternately brilliant and sweet Instrumental part.

SCENE II.

Glory and Love descend in the same chariot.

APOLLO, THE MUSES, GLORY, LOVE.

APOLLO.
What do I see? Oh Heavens! Should I believe it?
Love in the chariot of Glory!

GLORY.
What sad error seduces you!
See this charming God support of my Empire
Through him Love triumphs and the Warrior sighs;
He forms Heroes and his voice leads them.
He must be granted victory.
If one wants to shine at my court:
Nothing is more cherished by Glory
Than a great heart guided by Love.

APOLLO.
What! My divine Laurels wreathe the audacious brow
Of a reckless child?

LOVE.
You disdain Love, confront his rage.
At the feet of a severe Beauty
Go to make useless wishes.
Let a striking example show amorous Hearts
That on me alone depends the gift of pleasing,
That talents, wit, sincere ardor
Do not make lovers happy.

APOLLO.
Heavens! What charming object is recalled to my soul!
What a sudden flame
It inspires in my senses!
It is your power, Love that I experience:
At least to my nascent sighs
Deign to render Daphné sensitive.

LOVE.
I would make you happy; I mean to punish you.

APOLLO.
What! Always to sigh without being able to move her?
Cruel one! How terrible my pain is!

He goes away.

LOVE.
That is Love's vengeance.

MUSES.
Let's flee a faithless Tyrant
Let's fear in our turn.

GLORY.
Why this timid fright?
Apollo reigned among you.
Allow Love to preside there
Under sweeter auspices.

LOVE.
Ah! How sweet he is, how charming to please!
That is the most necessary art.

Ah! How sweet he is, how flattering
To know how to speak to the Heart!
Persuaded by Love the Muses repeat these four verses.

LOVE.

Hasten, games and mirth, sweet seducers of the Fair;
You through whom all give way to Love,
Confirm my triumph and adorn this abode
With myrtle and new flowers:
Graces more brilliant than they
Come to embellish my court.

SCENE III.
LOVE, GLORY, MUSES, GRACES.
BANDS OF GAMES AND MIRTH.

CHORUS.

Let's hasten, hasten to this new abode
Sigh rebellious Beauties
Through us all give way to Love.
They dance.

GLORY.

Winds, frightful storms
Through horrible ravages cause
Terror to sailors:
Love, when your voice guides him
Timid Alcyon is seen
To brave the fury of the waves
Your divine passion
Out of the weakest souls
Can make Heroes.
They dance.

CHORUS.

Glory, Love, share the victory over Hearts
Let Myrtle and Laurel be united from this day forth.
Let the efforts made for Glory
Be always paid for by Love.

LOVE.
Leave, Muses, leave this too sterile wilderness
Come enchant the Universe with your attractions;
After having adorned a thousand diverse climes
Let the empire of Lilies be your happy refuge
In the midst of the fine Arts you can shine there
With your most vivid light:
A glorious reign will make you find there
Lovers worthy of pleasing you,
And Heroes to celebrate.

END OF PROLOGUE.

HESIOD.—FIRST ENTRANCE.
The Theater represents a Grove
through which one sees some hamlets.

SCENE I.
EGLÉ, DORIS.

DORIS.
Love is going to offer you the most charming celebration,
Already each Shepherd is preparing to contend:
The Gift of your hand is promised to the victor.
How Hesiod is to be pitied! Alas! He adores you:
But the games of Apollo are arts he does not know
He is going to lose the prize for his tender sighs.

EGLÉ.
Doris, I love Hesiod, and more than can be thought
I am preoccupied with his happiness:
But it is by experiencing his ardor and his constancy
That I must reassure myself that he deserves my heart.

DORIS.
Will you be capable of evading your promises?

EGLÉ.
Doris, I do not know how to be of bad faith.

DORIS.
How can your Law be harmonized with your ardor?

EGLÉ.
This very day you will see all that Eglé can do.

DORIS.
In our unknown, foreign hamlets Eglé
Enjoys a deserved power over all hearts,
Nothing should be impossible for her
With the invincible aid
Of Mind and Beauty.

EGLÉ.
I perceive Hesiod:

DORIS.
Overburdened with sadness
He feels sorry for the ill fortune of his ardor.

EGLÉ.
I know how to dispel the suffering that assails him:
But for some moments let us hide from his eyes.

SCENE II.

HESIOD.
Eglé disdains my tenderness
Seduced by the songs of my Fortunate Rivals
Her heart is their prize, and in these hamlets
I alone do not know the secrets of the art she crowns
Eglé knows it and abandons me!
I am going to lose her irreversibly
Can it happen that for frivolous songs she gives
A prize that was due only to the most perfect love?

A soft instrumental piece is heard.

What sweet harmony makes itself heard here? . . .
It induces rest. . . . I cannot resist it. . . .
My eyes made heavy let their tears run dry. . . .
In the bosom of sleep I yield to its sweetness.

SCENE III.
EGLÉ, HESIOD, *asleep.*

EGLÉ.
Let the happiness of this faithful Shepherd begin,
Dreams; in this abode Euterpe calls you
Hasten to my voice, speak to my Lover.
With your seductive images
With your charming illusions
Announce to him the destiny that awaits him.

Dreams enter.

A DREAM.
Flattering dreams
When from a miserable heart
Your efforts appease the sufferings,
Sweet errors,
Of pitiless fate
Suspend the rigors for a long time;
Awakening, keep away:
Ah! How sweet is sleep!
But when a favorable dream
Presages genuine happiness,
Sleep, go away:
Ah! How sweet is awakening!

The Dreams withdraw.

EGLÉ.
You for whom I have left my sisters and Parnassus
You whom the Heavens have made worthy of my love
Tender Shepherd, of a sham disgrace
Fear not the effect today.
Receive the gift of verses. Let a new ardor enliven you.
Feel the sublime effect of Apollo's raptures
And raise yourself to the Heavens by your divine songs
Dare to make yourself equal to the Gods by extolling them.
A Lyre suspended from a Laurel arises next to Hesiod.
Love whose ardor has set my soul on fire
Deign to enliven my gifts with your divine flame:
We can inspire the efforts of genius;
But the happy outcome is due to your rapture.

SCENE IV.

HESIOD.
Where am I? What an awakening? What new fire inspires me?
What new day is dawning for me? All my senses are astonished
He notices the Lyre.
But what miracle stuns my spirits?
He touches it, and it gives out sounds.
Gods! What dazzling sounds come from this Lyre!
I am put into a frenzy by an unknown rapture!
I form harmonious songs effortlessly!
Oh Lyre! Oh dear gift from the Gods!
With your help I already speak their language.
The most powerful one of all arouses my courage,
I recognize Love in such beautiful raptures
And I am going to triumph over my jealous Rivals.

SCENE V.
HESIOD, BAND OF SHEPHERDS, *who assemble for the Festival.*

CHORUS.
May all resound,
May all applaud
Our various songs.
May Echo combine
May Eglé be moved
By our sweet concords.
Sweet hope of pleasing
Enliven our games,
Apollo will make
A lover happy:
Flattering victory!
Enchanting triumph!
Love and Glory
Will follow the victor.
They dance, after which Hesiod comes forward to compete.

CHORUS.
Oh Shepherd, lay down that useless Lyre
Do you wish to compete in our games today.

HESIOD.

Nothing is impossible for Love
I have not made a servile study of the art,
And my unruly voice
Has never been joined with pipes.
But in the success for which I hope
I expect all from the fire that illuminates me
And nothing from my feeble labors.

CHORUS.

Sing, reckless Shepherd;
We shall admire your new prodigies.

HESIOD, *begins.*

Beautiful fire that devours my soul
Breathe your divine ardor into my songs:
Bring into my mind that shining flame
With which you burn my heart . . .

CHORUS, *which interrupts Hesiod.*

His Lyre blots out our Bagpipes
Ah! we are vanquished!
Let's flee into our homes.

SCENE VI.
HESIOD, EGLÉ

HESIOD.

Fair Eglé. . . . But, oh Heaven! what unknown charms! . . .
You are immortal, and I was mistaken about it!
Shouldn't your Celestial attractions have taught me
That no one but the Gods is permitted to sigh for you?
Alas! At every instant without being able to keep myself from it
My too guilty heart increases your wrath.

EUTERPE.

Your fear offends my glory.
You deserve the prize that my oaths have promised;
I owe it to your victory,
And give it to your feelings.

HESIOD.

What you would be? . . . Oh Heaven, is it possible?
Muse, your divine gifts have anticipated my wishes
Should I still hope that your sensitive soul
Deigns to love a Shepherd and to share my ardor.

EUTERPE.

The virtue of mortals causes them to be ranked with the Gods.
A pure soul, a tender and sincere heart
Are the most precious goods
And when one knows how to love best
One is most worthy of pleasing.
[To the Shepherds.] Calm your jealous spite
Shepherds gather round:
Come to form the most cheerful festivals
I take pleasure in your woods, I cherish your Bagpipes
Acknowledge Euterpe and celebrate her ardor.

SCENE VII.
EUTERPE, HESIOD, THE SHEPHERDS.

CHORUS.

Charming muse, lovable muse
Who deigns to fix your tender wishes among us,
Always look on us with favor
Always preside over our games.

They dance.

DORIS.

Gods who govern the earth
Everything responds to your voices.
Gods who cast the thunder
All obey your laws.
Of your dazzling glory
Of your brilliant grandeur
Our hearts are not jealous.
Other goods are made for us.
United by a sincere love
Are a Shepherd, a Shepherdess
Any less happy than you?

OVID.—SECOND ENTRANCE.
The Theater represents Ovid's Gardens at Thome
and at the rear frightening Mountains strewn with precipices,
and covered with Snow.

SCENE I.

OVID.

Cruel love, fatal flame!
Must my soul still be given up to you?
Cruel love, fatal flame,
Is it the fate of Ovid always to love?
In these frozen climes in the depths of Scythia,
Is there no aid at all against your fires?
I burn there, alas! for the young Erithie:
For me, without her, there are no more fine days

Cruel love, . . . etc.

At least complete your work
Make Erithie subject in her turn.
Here everything languishes without love,
And she still does not know the use of her heart;
These flowers in my gardens attract her each day,
And I go by games. . . . It is she; oh sweet harbinger!
I move back with regret: but soon on my steps
Everything will speak to her the language
Of the charming God she does not know.

SCENE II.

ERITHIE.

Thus it is done; and in several moments
Diana will receive my oaths at her altars.
Cherished gardens, cheerful Groves
Alas! To my innocent games
You will no longer offer your shade!
Birds, your seductive warbling
Will no longer charm my senses.
Vain brilliance, importunate greatness!
Happy the one who in obscurity

Has not submitted to fortune
Her goodness and her freedom!
But what concords make themselves heard?
What enchanting spectacle comes to take me by surprise here?

SCENE III.

The statue of Love is raised up at the rear of the Theater, and all the followers of Ovid come to dance and sing around Erithie.

CHORUS.

Charming God, god of tender hearts
Reign forever, cast your flames.
Ah! What good would flatter our souls
Other than tender ardor?
Let's sing: let's not cease celebrating its charms,
Let it fill all our moments;
This God makes use of its weapons
Only to make happy Lovers.
Cares, tears, and sighs
Are the tributes of its Empire
But all the goods it draws from it
It returns to us with pleasures.

They dance.

ERITHIE.

What sweet concords! What a pleasant festival!
How charming I find this new language!
What then is this kind God?

She looks at the statue.

Alas! It is a Child! But what a lovable Child!
Why this bow and this blindfold,
This quiver, these arrows, this torch?

A MAN FROM THE FESTIVAL.

This feeble child is the Master of the world
Nature is ensouled by his fertile flame
And without him the Universe would perish with us,
Acknowledge, fair Erithie,
A God made to reign over you.
Of your lovable life, he wants
To give you the sweetest moments.

Extend the legitimate rights
Of the most powerful of immortals:
All hearts will be his victims
When you will serve his altars.

ERITHIE.
These lovable lessons have the art of pleasing me too much
But what then is this God of whom you want to speak to me?

OVID.
Discreet trustee of his sweetest secrets
I must reveal them to you alone in this place.

SCENE IV.
OVID, ERITHIE.

OVID.
It is a lovable Mystery
That gives relish to the prize of these charming goods:
The more one has felt them
The better one knows how to keep them secret.

ERITHIE.
I still don't know what are these goods so sweet,
But I burn to educate myself in them.

OVID.
You don't know it? Only you would say so
You must have read it already in my glances.

ERITHIE.
Your glances! . . . What seductive poison in his eyes?
Gods! What confused disturbance is roused in my Heart!

OVID.
Charming disturbance, that my soul shares,
You are the first homage
That lovable Erithie has offered to Love.

ERITHIE.
Love, then, is this formidable God?

OVID.

Love is this favorable God
Announced to you by my heart on fire today;
Let's profit from the benefits his hand prepares for us:
United by his bonds . . .

ERITHIE.

Alas! we are separated!
The care of Diana's temple has been committed to me;
All the people of Ithome wish to be witness to it
And from this day forth I must . . .

OVID.

No, charming Erithie,
Even the Peoples of Scythia.
Are subject to the conqueror whose Laws we follow:
They must be softened, our voices must be united.
So Hearts exist untouched by our love
If it is explained at once
By your tears and by my mouth.
But they approach . . . they come. . . . Love, if for your glory
I must pass my days in a frightful exile,
At least preserve the memory of my praise,
Grant your aid to my tender accents.

SCENE V.

OVID, ERITHIE, *troop of Sarmathians.*

CHORUS.

Let us celebrate the dazzling glory
Of the Goddess of the forests:
Without effort, without pain and without trying
We subsist through her benefits.
Let us celebrate the charming Beauty
Who shall serve her henceforth:
Let her hand for a long time give her
The offerings of her subjects.

They dance.

THE LEADER OF THE SARMATHIANS.

Come, fair Erithie . . .

OVID.

Ah! Deign to hear me.
Delay the torture of two tender lovers:
Or, if you complete this cruel sacrifice,
See the tears that you will cost me.

CHORUS.

No, she is promised to Diana:
Our promises are Laws;
Who could be so profane
As to deprive the Gods of their rights?

OVID and ERITHIE.

Our hearts are the portion of the most powerful of Gods,
Our love is his work:
Do more sacred rights exist?
By an unjust violence
The Gods are not honored.
Ah! If your indifference
Disdains our suffering,
To this God who joins us
We swear to die together
So as not to sunder our hearts.

CHORUS.

What hidden feeling comes to soften our hearts
For these unfortunate Lovers?
By love they are destined one to another
Let Love crown their ardor.

OVID.

You complete my happiness, too generous People.
What prize will be the recompense for this benefit?
May you by my efforts, by my gratitude
Learn to become happy.
Love calls you
Listen to his voice;
Let all be faithful
To his sweet Laws.
Of goods whose custom
Causes true happiness

The sweetest portion
Is a tender heart.

ANACREON.—THIRD ENTRANCE.

The Theater represents the Peristyle of the Temple of Juno at Samos.

SCENE I.
POLCRATES, ANACREON.

ANACREON.
At the feet of the Goddess the Beauties of Samos
By your order today will present their vows;
But, Sire, if I believe the suspicion that presses me
Under this mysterious Zeal
Your interest is a sweeter care.

POLYCRATES.
About points of tenderness one cannot
Deceive Anacreon's eyes.
Yes, the sweetest inclination carries me away
But I know neither the abode or the name
Of the object that captivates me.

ANACREON.
I perceive your intricate plan
Among so many Beauties you hope to know
The one whose attractions have captured your love
But this love then. . . .

POLYCRATES.
A moment caused its birth:
It was at those splendid games.
When my happy success celebrated by your Lyre . . .

ANACREON.
I remember that day, I fell in love
With the young Thémire.

POLYCRATES.
Ah! What? Always some new ardor?

ANACREON.

To beautiful eyes my heart easily gives way:
It even changes easily;
Love takes the place of love,
Only the taste for pleasure rules constantly in it.

POLYCRATES.

Soon a sweet victory
Without doubt enslaved her heart.

ANACREON.

My glory lacks that triumph
And my happiness that pleasure.

POLYCRATES.

But they come. . . . What charms! Ah! The wisest hearts
In seeing so many attractions must fear their chains.

ANACREON.

Juno, on this fine day the most tender homages
Will not be those offered to you.

SCENE II.

POLYCRATES, ANACREON.

A band of young Samian women who come to offer their homages to the Goddess.

HYMN TO JUNO.

Queen of the Gods, Mother of the Universe;
You by whom all breathe,
Who fills this Empire
With your goods most dear,
Juno, see these offerings:
Our hearts which you require
Are going to give them to you.
Let your beneficent hands
Deign to accept them.

They dance.

Carrying a basket of flowers, Thémire enters the Temple at the head of the young Samian girls.

POLYCRATES, *noticing Thémire.*
Oh Happiness!

ANACREON.
Oh height of pleasure!

POLYCRATES.
What charming features! What enchanting glances!

ANACREON.
Ah! How gracefully she carries those flowers!

POLYCRATES.
Those flowers! What are you saying? That is the beauty whom I love.

ANACREON.
That is Thémire herself.

POLYCRATES.
Friend too dear: Rival too dangerous,
Ah! How I fear your formidable ardors!
Stop the martyrdom of my unsettled heart.
Carry your fleeting desires to some other charms.
Let me taste the pleasures
Of cherishing you always and of Adoring Thémire.

ANACREON.
If my ardor were willing
I would sacrifice it instantly:
But the Love in my heart is no less sincere
For not always being constant.
Glory and greatness at the will of your desire
Assure you of the finest days
But what would I do with life
Without pleasures, without loves.

POLYCRATES.
Ah! How will your vain resistance serve you?
Ungrateful one, avoid my presence.

ANACREON.
You will calm this unjust wrath,
It is too unworthy of you.

SCENE III.

POLYCRATES.

Jealous outbursts, torments I detest,
Ah! Must I abandon myself to your sad fury?
Must a fatal rage always
Inspire hatred and its horrors along with love?
Cruel Love, your deadly power
Sunders more hearts
Than it reconciles.
I see Thémire. Oh enchanting raptures!

SCENE IV.
POLYCRATES, THÉMIRE.

POLYCRATES.

Thémire, resistance is vain when I see you
Everything gives way to your conquering charms,
Happy the Lover whose tender ardor
Will make you share the chain
You give to all hearts.

THÉMIRE.

I fly from sighs, languishing,
Cares, torments, alarms:
A pleasure that costs tears
Will never have any charm for me.

POLYCRATES.

To loving nothing is a torment.
It is a horrible torment to love hopelessly:
But it is a supreme good
To be reconciled in love.

THÉMIRE.

No, I fear even the bonds paired up by Love.

POLYCRATES.

Ah! At least know the goods it prepares for you.
You owe the remainder of this day to Juno.
Tomorrow an Illustrious conquest
Is promised to you in this abode.

SCENE V.

THÉMIRE.
He hid his rank from me, I pretended in my turn.
Polycrates offers me homage
That would fulfill Ambition:
A sweeter fate flatters me more
And my heart secretly cherishes Anacreon.
On the surface of a light wing
One sees the Zephyrs flit.
Like them with a flighty ardor
I flit from pleasure to pleasure.
From a formidable chain
I want to preserve my heart
As a lovable Child, Love would amuse me
As a proud conqueror I fear it.

SCENE VI.
ANACREON, THÉMIRE.

ANACREON.
Fair Thémire, finally the King gives you arms;
The Admission of all hearts authorizes mine:
If love animated your charms
Nothing would be lacking in them.

THÉMIRE.
But this indifference you announce to me
How indifferent the choice appears to you.
Who sees a Rival without pain
Is not far from inconstancy.

ANACREON.
You do a cruel offense to my ardor
You do it above all to my sincerity.
Even in love
I speak truly,
And when I love no more, I no longer say I love.

THÉMIRE.
When one feels extreme ardor
One has less tranquility.

ANACREON.
Judge my fidelity better, Thémire.
Ah! That a lover has the folly
To love, to hate in their turn:
What he gives to jealousy
I give entirely to Love.

THÉMIRE.
I fear what it costs in becoming more tender
No, Love causes too much torment in hearts.

ANACREON.
If Winter mars our fields
Is it up to Flora to defend them?
If lovers have ills
Must we find fault with Love?
Without snow and storms,
Without the winds and their ravages,
Flowers would always be born.
Without cold indifference,
Without proud resistance
All hearts would be content.

THÉMIRE.
You pride yourself for being flighty,
If I form bonds, I want them to be constant.

ANACREON.
The excessiveness of my ardor is more worthy homage
Than the fidelity of vulgar lovers:
It is worth more to love more
And not to love for long.

THÉMIRE.
No, nothing can settle down such a flighty lover.

ANACREON.
No, nothing can reward such charming outbursts.

THÉMIRE.
You seduce rather than convincing,
I see the error, yet let myself be conquered.

Ah! Fool me for a long time with these tender speeches,
The Illusion that pleases should last forever.

ANACREON.

It is in surpassing your hope
That I claim to deceive you henceforth:
You expect my inconstancy,
And will never suffer it.

TOGETHER.

United by the same desires
Let's unite my fate and yours
To pleasures always true
We should be to each other too.

SCENE VII.[2]

POLYCRATES, THÉMIRE, ANACREON.

POLYCRATES.

Remain, Anacreon, I suspend my wrath
And wish to make you equal to myself for a moment.
I shall not abuse my supreme power,
Let Thémire decide and choose between us.

To Thémire.

Say, which are the bonds that your soul prefers
Do not hesitate to name them:
I swear to confirm
The choice you will make.

THÉMIRE.

I know all the value of the happiness of pleasing you
If I dared to abandon myself to it; nevertheless today
Sire, you could believe
That I give all to glory.
I wish to give all to Love.
Pardon my heart an invincible inclination.

POLYCRATES.

Enough, I yield immediately.
Go, be united; I can feel it;
But I shall not forget my glory and my oath.

THÉMIRE AND ANACREON.
Worthy example of Kings, whose equitable heart
Triumphs even over itself by crowing our ardors
May Heaven always foresee your wishes:
May your lovable reign
By a constant happiness, ever memorable
Make eternal your happy days.

POLYCRATES, *to Anacreon.*
Begin to fulfill such a charming omen.
Return to my favor, leave not my court.
At least may Friendship compensate me
For the disfavor of Love.
Let all celebrate this festival!
The happy Anacreon sees his desires fulfilled.
Hasten, sing his conquest
As he has sung your pleasures.

SCENE VIII.
ANACREON, THÉMIRE, *People of Samos.*

CHORUS.
Let all celebrate this festival
The happy Anacreon sees his desires fulfilled.
Let's hasten, let's sing his conquest
As he has sung our pleasures.

They dance.

ANACREON, *alternately with the chorus.*
Games shine without ceasing;
Without you, tenderness
Would always languish.
To the most tender homage
A sweet bantering
Lends aid.

They dance.

When to please the Fair
One sees around them
Love frolic,
In their heart the traitor
Is soon the master
And laughs in his turn.

The Festivals of Ramire

Ballet Given at Versailles, December 22, 1745.

ACTORS AND ACTRESSES,
singing in all the Choruses.

ON THE KING'S SIDE;

The Ladies
Dun,
Tulou,
Delorge,
Varquin,
Dallemand-C.,
Larcher,
Delastre,
Riviere.

The Gentlemen
Lefebvre,
Marcelet,
Albert,
Le Page-C.,
Laubertie,
Le Breton,
Lamarre,
Fel,
Bourque,
Houbeau,
Bornet,
Cuvillier,
Gallard,
Duchénet,
Orban,
Rochette.

ON THE QUEEN'S SIDE;

The Ladies
Cartou,
Monville,
Lagrandville,
Masson
Rollet,
Desgranges,
Gondré
Verneuil.

The Gentlemen
Dun,
Person,
De Serre,
Gratin,
St-Martin,
Le Mesle,
Chabou,
Levasseur,
Belot,
Louatron,
Forestier,
Therasse,
Dugay,
Le Begue,
Cordelet,
Rhone.

The Ballets are by Master Laval, composer of the King's Ballets.

SINGING ACTORS.

RAMIRE, son of Alphonse the King of Castille,	Master Poirier.
FATIME, Princesse of Granada,	Miss Romainville.
ISBÉ, Fatime's confidante,	Miss Jaquet.
A WARRIOR,	Mr. Jelyotte.
ANOTHER WARRIOR,	Mr. Le Page.

Troop of Warriors,	
A SOOTHSAYER	Mr. de Chassé.
Troop of Soothsayers, Female Soothsayers, Bohemian men and women.	
THE GRACES	Fel. Misses Coupée Gondré.
Troop of Cupids, Pleasures, and Games	
SERVANTS of Ramire	Mr. Albert. Miss Bourbonnois.
Troop of servants of Ramire of different sorts.	

FIRST DIVERTISSEMENT.—WARRIORS.

Mr. Pitro;
Misters Matigon, Malter-C., Monservin, De Vic, Dumay, Dupré, Feuillade, Levoir.

SECOND DIVERTISSEMENT.—BOHEMIAN MEN AND WOMEN.

Miss Camargo;
Misters F-Dumoulin, P-Dumoulin, Hamoche, Dangeville;
Misses Thiery, Puvignée, Grogner, Lyonnois-C.

THIRD DIVERTISSEMENT.—GAMES AND PLEASURES.

Miss Sallé
Mr. Laval, Miss Puvignée
Misters Dumay, Dupré, Malter-C., Matignon, Gherardi, Caillez;
Misses Erny, Lyonnois-L., Courcelle, St-Germain, Petit, Beaufort.

FOURTH DIVERTISSEMENT.—SERVANTS OF RAMIRE.

Misters Javillier-L., Monservin, Javillier-C.;
Misses, Rabon, Carville, Rosalie;
And the Actors of the preceding Divertissement.

The Theater represents a prison.

SCENE I.

FATIME, ISBÉ, *Fatime's confidante.*

FATIME.

Oh Death, come to end the suffering of my life.
I have seen my throne and my fatherland fall,
My father has descended into the night of death,
With barbarity the Victors
Have dragged my steps to this place.
Oh Death, come to end the suffering of my life.

ISBÉ.

Alphonse is a cruel victor;
But his son Ramire has all his valor,
Without having his barbarous pride;
Often in his kindnesses, just Heaven atones for
The evils he did in his rage.

FATIME.

Implacable is the hatred of the blood from which he is born,
You know our enmity,
No, do not expect pity
From that inexorable race.

The noise of trumpets is heard.
The Theater changes and represents a pleasant spot.

What do I see! What miracle has changed this abode?
Oh heaven! What God favors us?

ISBÉ.

Fatime is fair, and Fatime is surprised?
Ah! Doubtless this God is Love.

SCENE II.

FATIME, ISBÉ, CHORUS AND TROOP OF WARRIORS.

A WARRIOR, *to Fatime.*

* [1] Young beauty, cease complaining,
* Banish your terrors:
* It's you who must be feared,
* Reign over our hearts.

THE CHORUS.
* Young beauty, . . . etc.

They dance.

THE WARRIOR.
* When Venus comes to embellish the earth,
* It is in our fields she establishes her court.
* The terrible God of war,
* Disarmed in her arms, smiles at tender Love.
* Beauty always disposes
* Of invincible warriors,
* And charming Love is on a bed of roses,
* In the shadow of laurels.

* When Venus, . . . etc.

THE CHORUS.
* Young beauty, cease complaining,
* Banish your terrors:
* It's you who must be feared,
* Reign over our hearts.

They dance.

ANOTHER WARRIOR.
* If some tyrant oppresses you,
* He will fall as the victim
* Of Love and of valor,
* He will fall beneath the avenging sword.

THE FIRST WARRIOR.
* In your presence
* All should catch fire:
* For your defense,
* All should take arms.

THE CHORUS.
* In your presence
* All should catch fire:
* For your defense,
* All should take arms.

The Warriors dance and exit.

SCENE III.
FATIME, ISBÉ.

FATIME.
What have I seen! What objects have enchanted my eyes!
What, from the frightful thick walls of a prison,
We are transported into the Heavens!

ISBÉ.
It is the worthy Ramire, or the Master of the earth,
Who embellished this place for you.

SCENE IV.
FATIME, ISBÉ.
Chorus and Troop of Bohemian Men and Women, Male and Female Soothsayers, who enter dancing.

A SOOTHSAYER.
* We captivate time, pleasure follows our steps,
* We bring into hearts flattering hope,
* We give them enjoyment
* Even of goods they have not:
* The present takes flight, it carries us away,
* The past is no more;
* Charm of the future, you are the only good
* Left to human weakness.

They dance.

THE SOOTHSAYER.
* The shining and sweet Star of the daughter of the wave.
* Which precedes or who follows the day.
* To begin for you again its turn:
* For the happiness of the world Mars wished to be united,
* To the Planet of Love.
* But when celestial favors
* Come together on our precious days,
* Inhuman and fatal Gods
* Are pleased to disturb them.

This entire Troop exists dancing.

SCENE V.
FATIME, ISBÉ.

ISBÉ.

Can you still be in doubt
That this Hero is subject to your laws!
These games, these dances, and these voices,
All have told you that he adores you.

FATIME.

Ah, how dangerous Ramire is!
And how his Captive is to be pitied:
I braved the Hero, and I begin to fear
The subject and generous Lover.

ISBÉ.
Here he is.

FATIME.

His presence increases my alarm.

SCENE VI.
RAMIRE, FATIME, ISBÉ.

RAMIRE.

Am I allowed to appear before your eyes?
And to pay homage to your charms,
More powerful, more victorious,
And more respected than our arms?

FATIME.
Fate and valor have made me subject to your laws.
My soul is bewildered,
By the evils, into which fate rushes me through your hands,
And the miracles that I see.

RAMIRE.
At your feet I restore your faithful retinue,
Your eager Subjects come to obey you.

How I shall envy their fate, while matching their zeal!
How happy they are to serve you!

A troop appears at the rear of the Theatre, under the form of Graces, Cupids, Pleasures, and Games.

RAMIRE, *to this troop.*
Graces, Pleasures, Cupids, hasten to appear,
Shine through her charms.
Addressing himself to Fatime.
There are your Subjects, you should know them;
Have they ever left your side?

LAST SCENE.
CHORUS AND TROUPE OF FATIME'S RETINUE,
Under the form of Graces, Cupids, and Pleasures:
and the Actors of the preceding Scene.

THE THREE GRACES, *to Fatime.*
* By forming you Nature
* Caused us to be born near you;
* We cannot appear far from your eyes;
* We serve you faithfully;
* But charming Love is our first master.
They dance.

ONE OF THE GRACES.
* Eco, errant voice,
* Light resident
* Of this abode,
* Eco, daughter of Love,
* Sweet Nightingale, thick woods, pure wave,
* Repeat with me what nature says:
* One must love in one's turn.
They dance.

THE SAME GRACE.
* Raging winds, sad storms,
* Depart from our climes:
* Fine days, arise over our heads.
* Flowers, be born on our steps.
They dance.

THE SAME.

* No, the greatest empire
* Cannot fill a heart.
* Charming victor,
* Seductive God,
* It's your illusion
* That brings happiness.

ANOTHER GRACE.

Proud beauty, charming object,
Pardon, * grant mercy,
* Pardon the audacity
Of the most tender lover.
* You alone are the cause
* Of what he dares,
* You alone make his ardor blaze,
* What crime is more forgivable?
* It's that of your fair eyes,
* Seeing them every mortal is guilty.

Proud Beauty, . . . etc.

CHORUS.

Proud Beauty, . . . etc.

RAMIRE, *to Fatime.*
Will you pardon that love that captivates me?
Our criminal ancestors always hated each other,
The love, with which my heart is smitten,
Is a hundred times stronger than their hatred.

FATIME.
Ah! Have I not suffered enough ills?
My peoples are vanquished by your supreme effort;
Must it also triumph over me,
And give me new chains?

Fatime gives her hand to Ramire; A new troop of Ramire's servants comes to join the other troops. They dance.

TWO SERVANTS OF RAMIRE, *alternately with the Chorus.*
* Love, charming God, your power
* Has formed this new abode,

* All here feel your presence,
* And all the world is your court.
Your favorites,
The most cherished,
Are the children of victory:
It's by your ardor
That they are happy.
Your goods are the reward for their glory.

They dance.

RAMIRE, *alternately with the Chorus.*

* Mars, Love, are our Gods:
* We serve them both.
* Hasten after so many alarms,
* Fly pleasure, children of the Heavens;
* To the cry of Mars, to the clash of arms,
* Mix your sounds harmonious sounds,
* To so many exploits victorious,
* Pleasures, measure all your charms.
* Mars, Love, are our Gods:
* We serve them both.

They dance.

CHORUS.

* Glory always calls us,
* We march under her standard,
* Burning with the finest ardor,
For her, * for Love and Mars.

THE TWO SERVANTS.

* Charming pleasures, noble hazards,
Always share our zeal.

They dance.

RAMIRE AND A WARRIOR.

Forever without division
Let us unite our / Let us unite your rights
May the same courage
* Triumph under the same laws.[2]

They dance.

RAMIRE.

These beautiful bonds,
Happy people,
Will set the capstone to your glory,
These beautiful bonds,
Happy people,
Will set the capstone to your wishes.
The God Mars
In all hazards,
Sees us dispute the victory,
And Love
On this fine day,
Sees your hearts united at his court.

END.

The Village Soothsayer.

Interlude.

Performed at Fontainebleau before Their Majesties
October 18 and 24, 1752.
And at Paris, by the Royal Academy of Music,
March 1, 1753.

To Mr. Du Clos,[1]
Historiographer of France, and one of the Forty of the French Academy, and the Academy of Inscriptions, and the Academy of Belles-Lettres.

Grant, Sir, that your name be at the head of this Work, which might never have appeared without you. This will be my first and only Dedication. May it do you as much honor as it does me.

I am with all my heart,
SIR,
Your very humble and very Obedient Servant,

J. J. Rousseau.

PREFACE.

Although I approved the changes that my friends judged it suitable to make to this Interlude when it was played at Court and, although its success was due in large part to them, I have not judged it suitable to adopt them today, and that is so for several reasons. The first is, that, since this Work carries my name, it is necessary that it be mine, even if it must be the worse for it: The second, that these changes might have been extremely good in themselves, and nevertheless remove from the Piece that unity so little known that would be the masterpiece of art, if one could preserve it without repetitions and without Monotony.[2] My third reason is, that having written this work only for my amusement, its true success is to please me: Now no one knows better than I do how it must be in order to please me the most.

CHARACTERS.

COLIN.
COLETTE.
THE SOOTHSAYER.
TROOP OF YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE VILLAGE.

The Theater represents, on one side the Soothsayer's House; on the other Trees and Fountains, and at the rear a Hamlet.

SCENE I.

COLETTE *weeping, and wiping her eyes with her apron.*

I have lost all my happiness;
I have lost my Servitor;
Colin has forsaken me.

Alas! Is he capable of changing!
I want to think about it no more:
I think about it endlessly.

I have lost my Servitor;
I have lost all my happiness;
Colin has forsaken me.

He used to love me and that was my misfortune.
But then who is the one he prefers to me?
She is, then, very charming! Imprudent Shepherd,
Do you not fear the ills that I suffer today?
Colin is capable of changing toward me; you can have your turn.

What use to me to dream about it endlessly?
Nothing can cure my love,
And everything increases my sadness.

I have lost my Servitor;
I have lost all my happiness;
Colin has forsaken me.

I want to hate him. . . . I ought to . . .
Perhaps he loves me still. . . . Why does he flee me endlessly?
He used to seek me out so much.

The Soothsayer of the region has his residence here:
He knows everything. He will know my love's fate.
I see him, and I want to clear things up today.

SCENE II.

THE SOOTHSAYER, COLETTE.

While the Soothsayer comes forward gravely, Colette counts some change in her hand: then she folds it in a paper and gives it to the Soothsayer, after having hesitated a little over addressing him.

COLETTE, *with a timid air.*
Will I lose Colin forever?
Tell me if I must die.

THE SOOTHSAYER, *seriously.*
I read in your heart and I have read in his.

COLETTE.
Oh Gods!

THE SOOTHSAYER.
Control yourself.

COLETTE.
Well then?
Colin . . .

THE SOOTHSAYER.
Is unfaithful to you.

COLETTE.
I am dying.

THE SOOTHSAYER.
And yet he loves you still.

COLETTE, *in a lively manner.*
What are you saying?

THE SOOTHSAYER.
More skillful and less fair,
The Lady of these places . . .

COLETTE.

He is leaving me for her!

THE SOOTHSAYER.
I have already told you; he loves you still.

COLETTE, *sadly.*
And still he flees me.

THE SOOTHSAYER.

Count on my aid.
I claim I shall bring the fickle one back to your feet;
Colin wants to be brave; he loves to show off:
His vanity has given you an insult,
For which his love must atone.

COLETTE.

If of the gallants of the town
I had listened to the speeches,
Ah! How easy it would be for me
To form other ties of love!

Dressed as a rich Damsel,
I would shine every day;
With Ribbons and Lace
I would change my attire.

For the faithless one's love
I have rejected my happiness;
I would prefer to be less fair,
And keep my heart for him.

THE SOOTHSAYER.
I shall give his back to you, this will be my work.
You, apply your efforts to keeping it better.
To make yourself loved more,
Feign loving a little less.

Love grows when it is uneasy;
It falls asleep if it is content:
A slightly coquettish Shepherdess
Makes the Shepherd more constant.

COLETTE.
Colette gives herself up to your wise lessons.

THE SOOTHSAYER.
Take another tone with Colin.

COLETTE.
I shall feign imitating the example he sets for me.

THE SOOTHSAYER.
Do not imitate him in earnest;
But so that he can't be sure.
My art teaches me that he is coming;
I shall call you when it is time.

SCENE III.

THE SOOTHSAYER.
I knew it all from Colin and these poor children
Both admire the profound science
That makes me divine all that they taught me.
Their love seconds me fittingly today;
By making them happy, I must oppose
The airs and the scorn of the Lady of the place.

SCENE IV.
THE SOOTHSAYER, COLIN.

COLIN.
Love and your lessons have finally made me wise;
I prefer Colette to useless goods:
I can please her in village clothes;
What more will I obtain in clothes of gold?

THE SOOTHSAYER.
Colin, it is no longer time, and Colette has forgotten you.

COLIN.
She has forgotten me, oh Heaven! Is Colette capable of changing?

THE SOOTHSAYER.
She is a woman, young, and pretty;
Would she fail to be avenged?

COLIN.
No, Colette is not deceitful:
She promised me her faith;
Can she be in love
With any Shepherd but me?

THE SOOTHSAYER.
It is no Shepherd that she prefers to you,
It is a fine Gentleman of the Town.

COLIN.
Who told you so?

THE SOOTHSAYER, *emphatically.*
My art.

COLIN.
I couldn't have suspected it.
Alas! How it will cost me
For having been too easygoing!
For letting myself be taken in by Ladies of the Court!
Could I then have lost Colette forever?

THE SOOTHSAYER.
One cannot serve fortune and Love at the same time.
Sometimes it costs to be such a fine lad.

COLIN.
Have mercy, teach me the way to avoid
The horrible blow that I dread.

THE SOOTHSAYER.
Leave me alone for a moment to consult.
The Soothsayer takes out of his pocket a magic book and a little magic wand, with which he casts a spell. Some young Peasants, who were coming to consult him, let their gifts fall, and run away terrified at seeing his contortions.

THE SOOTHSAYER.
The spell is cast. Colette is going to make her way to this spot;
You must await her here.

COLIN.
Will I be able to succeed in appeasing her?
Alas! Will she be willing to listen to me?

SOOTHSAYER.
With a faithful and tender heart,
One has the right to obtain everything.

Aside.

Let's go inform her in advance of what she must say.

SCENE V.

COLIN.
I am going to see my charming Mistress again
Farewell, castles, splendor, riches,
Your brilliance tempts me no longer.
If my tears, my attentive efforts
Can touch what I adore,
I shall see you reborn again,
Sweet moments I have lost.

When one knows how to love and please,
Does one need any other good?
Give me back your heart, my Shepherdess,
Colin has given his back to you.

My pipe, my crook,
Be my only splendor
My Colette is my adornment,
Her favors are my treasure.

How Lords of consequence
Would like to have her troth!
In spite of all their power
They are less happy than I.

SCENE VI.
COLIN, COLETTE, *dressed up.*

COLIN, *aside.*
I see her. . . . I tremble at offering myself to her sight. . . .
. . . Save us. . . . I lose her if I flee. . . .

COLETTE, *aside.*
He sees me. . . . How nervous I am!
My heart is beating. . . .

COLIN.
. . . I do not know where I am.

COLETTE.
I have drawn too close, without thinking about it.

COLIN.
I cannot withdraw, I must approach her.
To Colette, with a mollifying tone, and a half-laughing, half-embarrassed manner.
My Colette . . . are you angry?
I am Colin: deign to look at me.

COLETTE.
Colin loved me, Colin was faithful to me:
I look at you, and no longer see Colin.

COLIN.
My heart has not changed at all: my too cruel error
Came from a fate cast by some malicious spirit;
The Soothsayer has destroyed it. I am in spite of desire
Still Colin, still in love.

COLETTE.
By a fate, in my turn, I feel myself pursued,
The Soothsayer can do nothing about it.

COLIN.
How unhappy I am!

COLETTE.
By a more constant Lover . . .

COLIN.
Ah! followed by my death,
Your faithlessness . . .

COLETTE.
Your efforts are useless
No, Colin, I love you no more.

COLIN.
Your faith has not been torn from me;
No, consult your heart better:
You yourself, by taking my life from me
Would lose all your happiness.

COLETTE, *aside.*
Alas!
To Colin.
No, you have betrayed me.
Your efforts are useless:
No, Colin, I love you no more.

COLIN.
It's done then! You want me to die,
And I shall withdraw from the hamlet forever.

COLETTE, *calling back Colin who is withdrawing slowly.*
Colin?

COLIN.
What?

COLETTE.
You are fleeing me?

COLIN.
Must I remain
To see a new lover with you?

COLETTE.

As long as I could please Colin,
My fate fulfilled my desires.

COLIN.

When I pleased my Shepherdess,
I lived with pleasures.

COLETTE.

Since his heart disdained me,
Another has won mine.

COLIN.

After the gentle ties she breaks,
Would there be any other good?

In a piercing tone.

My Colette is withdrawing!

COLETTE.

I am afraid of a fickle lover.

TOGETHER.

I withdraw in my turn.
Having become peaceful, my heart
Will forget if it can,
One day that you were dear to it.

COLIN.

Whatever happiness they promise me,
In the bonds that are offered me,
I would still prefer Colette
To all the goods in the Universe.

COLETTE.

Although a young, lovable Lord,
Speaks to me today of love
To me Colin would seem preferable
To all the brilliance of Court.

COLIN, *tenderly.*

Ah! Colette!

COLETTE, *with a sigh.*

Ah! Fickle Shepherd!
Must I love you in spite of myself?

Colin throws himself at Colette's feet; she draws his attention to an extremely costly ribbon in his hat which he had received from the Lady: Colin throws it away disdainfully. Colette gives him a simpler one, with which she had been adorned, and which he receives with rapture.

TOGETHER.

I promise you
Forever, Colin
Promises you
My my faith
heart and
His his faith
May a sweet marriage
Unite me with you.
Let's love always without dividing:
May love be our law.

Forever, . . . etc.

SCENE VII.
THE SOOTHSAYER, COLIN, COLETTE.

THE SOOTHSAYER.
I have freed you from a cruel evil spell;
You still love each other in spite of the envious.

COLIN.
What gift could ever pay for such a service?

They each offer a gift to the Soothsayer.

THE SOOTHSAYER, *taking the two hands.*
I am paid enough if you are happy.

Come, young boys; come, lovable girls:
Gather together, come, imitate them.
Come, gallant Shepherds; come, gentle Beauties,
While singing their happiness, learn to savor it.

SCENE VIII, FINALE.
THE SOOTHSAYER, COLIN, COLETTE,
BOYS AND GIRLS OF THE VILLAGE.

CHORUS.

Colin returns to his Shepherdess;
Let's celebrate such a fine return.
May their sincere friendship
Have an ever-renewed charm.

Let's sing the dazzling power
Of the Soothsayer of our Village
He brings back a fickle lover
And makes him happy and constant.

COLIN.

ROMANCE.

In my gloomy hut,
Always new cares;
Wind, sun, or cold,
Always pain and labor.
Colette, my Shepherdess,
If you come to live there,
In his cottage, Colin
Has nothing to regret.

From fields, from meadows
Returning each night,
Each night more dear
I shall come to see you again
Preceding the return
Of the sun in our plains,
I shall charm away my pains
Singing of our love.

PANTOMIME.

THE SOOTHSAYER.

All must vie with
What we here display;
If I cannot leap this way,
For my part I shall say a new song.

He takes a song from his pocket.

VAUDEVILLE.

I.

Art is favorable to Love,
And Love can charm artlessly;
In the town one is more lovable,
In the village one knows better how to love.
Ah! Ordinarily
Love hardly knows
What it allows, what it forbids;
It is a child, it is a child.

COLIN, *repeats the refrain.*

Ah! Ordinarily
Love hardly knows
What it allows, what it forbids;
It is a child, it is a child.

Looking at the song.

It has more couplets! I find it rather fine.

COLETTE, *eagerly.*

Let's see, let's see, we shall sing too.

She takes the song.

II.

Love follows the innocence
Of simple Nature here;
In other places, from adornment
It looks for a borrowed shine
Ah! Ordinarily
Love hardly knows
What it allows, what it forbids;
It is a child, it is a child.

CHORUS.

It is a child, it is a child.

III.

COLIN.

Often a cherished ardor
Is that of an artless heart;

Often from coquetry
A fickle heart is kept.
Ah! Ordinarily, . . . etc.
At the end of each couplet, the Chorus repeats this verse.
It is a child, it is a child.

IV.

THE SOOTHSAYER.

Love, according to its whim,
Orders and disposes of us:
This God permits jealousy,
And this God punishes the jealous.
Ah! Ordinarily, . . . etc.

V.

COLIN.

By flitting from beauty to beauty,
One often loses the happy moment
Often a too faithful Shepherd
Is less loved than an inconstant one.
Ah! Ordinarily, . . . etc.

VI.

COLETTE.

One is exposed to his caprice,
He wants laughter, he wants tears;
By the . . . by the . . .
She has trouble reading.

COLIN, *helps her to make it out.*

By the rigors one repels it;

COLETTE.

One weakens it with favors.

TOGETHER.

Ah! Ordinarily
Love hardly knows
What it allows, what it forbids;
It is a child, it is a child.

CHORUS.
It is a child, it is a child.

They dance.

COLETTE.

With the object of my loves,
Nothing afflicts me, all enchants;
Ceaselessly he laughs, I forever sing:
It is a chain of happy days.

When one knows well how to love, how charming life is!
As, in the midst of flowers that shine on its course,
A gentle stream runs and winds its way.
When one knows well how to love, how charming life is!

They dance.

COLETTE.

ROUND.
Let's go dance under the elms:
Step lively, young lassies.
Let's go dance under the elms:
Gallants, take up your pipes.

The Villagers repeat these four verses.

COLETTE.

Let's repeat a thousand songs:
And to have a joyful heart
Let's dance with our lovers,
But let's never remain lonely!

Let's go dance under the elms, . . .etc.

THE VILLAGERS.

Let's go dance under the elms, . . . etc.

COLETTE.

In the Town they make much more fuss,
But are they as gay in their frolics?
Always content,
Always singing,
Artless pleasures,

Unpainted beauty;
Are all their concerts worth our bagpipes?

Let's go dance under the elms, . . . etc.

THE VILLAGERS.

Let's go dance under the elms, . . . etc.

Pygmalion

LYRIC SCENE

The Theater represents a sculptor's studio. On the sides are seen blocks of marble, groups of rough-hewn statues. At the rear is another statue hidden under a canopy of light and brilliant fabric, ornamented with fringe and garlands.

Pygmalion, seated and leaning on an elbow, dreams with the attitude of a restless and sad man; then suddenly rising, he takes from a table the tools of his art, at intervals he goes to give some blows with the chisel on some of his rough statues, steps back, and looks with a discontented and discouraged air.

PYGMALION.

There is neither soul nor life there; there is only stone. I shall never make anything of all that.

Oh my genius, where are you? My talent, what has become of you? All my fire is extinguished, my imagination is frozen, the marble departs cold from my hands.

Pygmalion, no longer make Gods: you are only a common artist. . . . Vile instruments that are no longer those of my glory, go, do not dishonor my hands.

He throws his tools with disdain, then walks for a while dreaming, his arms crossed.

What has happened to me? what strange revolution has occurred in me? . . .

Tyre, opulent and superb city, the monuments of the arts with which you shine no longer attract me, I have lost the taste I had for admiring them. The commerce of Artists and Philosophers becomes insipid for me. Conversation with Painters and Poets has no attraction for me. Praise and glory no longer elevate my soul. The praise of those who will receive it from posterity no longer touches me. Even friendship has lost its charms for me. And you, young objects, masterpieces of nature that my art dares to imitate, and in whose steps pleasures ceaselessly attract me, you my charming models who set aflame for me the fire of love and genius at the same time, since I have surpassed you, you are indifferent to me.

He sits down and contemplates everything around him.

Kept in the studio by an inconceivable charm, I do not know how to do anything here, and I cannot stay away. I wander from group to group, from figure to figure. My feeble, uncertain chisel no longer submits to its guide: these clumsy works, left in their timid outline, no longer feel the hand that once would have animated them. . . .

He gets up impetuously.

It's over, it's over; I have lost my genius. . . . Still so young, and I outlive my talent.

But then what is this internal ardor that devours me? What do I have in me that seems to set me on fire? What! In the languidness of an extinguished genius, does one feel these emotions, does one feel these bursts of impetuous passions, this insurmountable restlessness, the secret agitation that torments me and whose cause I cannot unravel?

I fear that admiration for my own work has caused the distraction that I bring to my labors. I have hidden it under the veil . . . my profane hands have dared to cover this monument of their glory. Since I no longer see it, I am sadder and no more attentive.

How dear it will be to me, how precious it will be to me, this immortal work! When my extinguished mind no longer produces anything great, beautiful, worthy of me, I shall show my Galatea, and I shall say: This is my work! Oh my Galatea! When I have lost everything, you will remain with me, and I will be consoled.

He approaches the canopy, then withdraws, goes, comes, and stops sometimes to look at it while sighing.

But why hide it? What do I gain by doing so? Reduced to idleness, why deprive myself of the pleasure of contemplating the most beautiful of my works? . . . Perhaps there remains some flaw that I have not noticed; perhaps I shll still be able to add some ornament to its adornment; no imaginable grace should be missing to such a charming object. . . . Perhaps this object will revive my languishing imagination. I must see it again, examine it anew. What do I say? Ah! I have not yet examined it: up to now I have only admired it.

He goes to lift the veil, and lets it fall again as if frightened.

I know not what emotion I suffer when touching this veil; a fright seizes me; I believe that I touch the sanctuary of some Divinity. . . . Pygmalion! it is a stone; it is your work. What does it matter? Gods are served in our temples who are of no other material and who have been made by no other hand.

Trembling, he lifts the veil, and prostrates himself. The statue of Galatea is seen posed on a pedestal that is very small, but raised by a marble tier formed by some semicircular steps.

Oh Galatea! receive my homage. Yes I deceived myself: I wished to make you a Nymph, and I made you a Goddess: Even Venus is less beautiful than you.

Vanity, human weakness! I cannot grow weary of admiring my work; I intoxicate myself with amour-propre; I adore myself in what I have made. . . . No, never has anything so beautiful appeared in nature; I have surpassed the work of the Gods. . .

What! so many beauties come out of my hands? My hands have touched them then? My mouth could then . . . Pygmalion! I see a flaw. This garment covers the nakedness too much; it must be opened up some more; the charms it harbors should be better announced.

He takes his hammer and chisel, then slowly advancing, he climbs, while hesitating, the tier of the statue that he seems not to dare to touch. Finally, having already raised the chisel, he stops himself.

What trembling! what disturbance! I hold the chisel with an unsteady hand. . . . I cannot . . . I dare not . . . I shall spoil everything.

He encourages himself, and at last, presenting his chisel, he gives it a single blow, and seized with fright, he lets it fall, while uttering a great cry.

Gods! I feel the palpitating flesh repelling the chisel! . . .

He climbs down, trembling and confused.

Vain terror, foolish blindness! . . . No, I shall not touch it at all; the Gods terrify me. Doubtless she has already been consecrated to their rank.

He considers it anew.

What do you want to change? look; what new charm do you want to give it? . . . Ah! Its flaw is caused by perfection. . . . Divine Galatea! Less perfect you would be lacking nothing.

Tenderly.

But you lack a soul: your form cannot do without one.

With even more tenderness.

How beautiful the soul made to animate such a body must be!

He stops for a long time, then, returning, sits down, he says with a slow and changed voice.

What desires do I dare to form? What senseless wishes! What do I feel? . . . Oh heaven! The veil of the illusion falls, and I do not dare to look in my heart: I would have too much with which to be indignant.

Long pause in a deep depression.

. . . This, then, is the noble passion that leads me astray! it is then for this inanimate object that I dare not leave here . . . a piece of marble! a rock! an unformed and hard mass, worked on with this iron! . . . Senseless man, return to yourself; bemoan yourself, see your error . . . see your madness. . . .

. . . But no . . .

Impetuously.

No, I have not lost my senses; no, I do not extravagate; no, there is nothing for which to reproach myself. It is not at all this dead marble with which I am infatuated, it is with a living being who resembles it; it is with the face that it offers to my eyes. Wherever that adorable face may be, whatever body may bear it, and whatever hand may have made it, she will have all the wishes of my heart. Yes, my only madness is to discern beauty, my sole crime is to be sensitive to it. There is nothing in that for which I should blush.

Less lively, but still with passion.

What shafts of fire seem to come from that object to set my senses ablaze, and return to their source with my soul! Alas! it stays immobile and cold, while my heart, set ablaze by its charms, wants to leave my body in order to warm its body. In my delirium I believe that I can hurl myself out of myself; I believe that I can give it my life, and animate it with my soul. Ah! that Pygmalion might die in order to live in Galatea! . . . Oh Heaven, what do I say! If I were she, I would not see her, I would not be the one who loves her! No, that my Galatea live, and that I not be she. Ah! that I might always be another, in order to wish always to be she, to see her, to love her, to be loved by her.

Rapture.

Torments, wishes, desires, rage, impotence, terrible love, fatal love . . . oh! all hell is in my agitated heart. . . . Powerful Gods! Beneficent Gods! Gods of the people who know the passions of men! Ah! you have performed so many miracles for less important causes. See this object, see my heart; be just and deserve your altars!

With a more pathetic enthusiasm.

And you, sublime essence who hides yourself from the senses, and makes yourself felt by means of hearts! soul of the universe, principle of all existence; you who through love gives harmony to the elements, life to matter, feeling to bodies, and form to all beings, sacred fire! heavenly Venus, by whom everything preserves itself and ceaselessly reproduces itself! Ah! where is your equilibrium? where is your expansive force? where is the law of nature in the feeling that I suffer? where is your life-giving heat in the inanity of my vain desire? All your fires are concentrated in my heart and the cold of death remains on the marble; I perish from the excess of life which it lacks. Alas! I do not expect a miracle; it exists, it ought to cease; order is troubled, nature is outraged; return its laws to their empire, reestablish equally its beneficent course and power and your divine influence. Yes, for the fullness of things two beings are lacking. Divide between them this devouring ardor that consumes one without animating the other. It is you who formed with my hand these charms and features that await only feeling and life . . . give it half of mine, give it all, if necessary, it will be enough for me to live in her. Oh you who deign to smile at the homage of mortals! what feels nothing does not honor you. Extend your glory with your works. Goddess of beauty, rescue this affront to nature, that such a perfect model be the image of that which is not.

He returns to himself by degrees with a movement of assurance and joy.

I am recovering my senses. What an unexpected calm! what unhoped-for courage reanimates me! A mortal fever sets my blood on fire: a balm of confidence and hope flow through my veins: I believe I feel myself being reborn.

Thus the feeling of our dependence sometimes serves as our consolation. However unhappy mortals may be, when they have invoked the Gods, they are more tranquil . . .

But this unjust confidence fools those who make senseless wishes. . . . Alas! In the state I am in, one invokes everything and nothing hears one. The hope that abuses us is more senseless than the desire.

Ashamed of so many deviations, I do not even dare to contemplate the cause any more. When I wish to raise my eyes to that fatal object, I feel a new disturbance, a palpitation suffocates me, a secret fright stops me . . .

Bitter irony.

. . . Ah! look unfortunate one! become intrepid, dare to gaze at a statue.

He sees her come to life, and turns away with fright and his heart broken with sadness.

What have I seen? Gods! What did I believe I saw? The coloring of flesh . . . a fire in the eyes . . . even movements . . . It was not enough to wish for the miracle; for the peak of misery, at last, I have seen it . . .

Excess of depression.

Unfortunate one! then it has happened . . . your delirium is at the final step; your reason abandons you as well as your genius! . . . Don't regret it, oh Pygmalion! Its loss will cover your disgrace.

Lively indignation.

It is too funny for the lover of a stone to become a man of visions.

He turns around and sees the statue moving and descending by herself the steps by which he climbed onto the pedestal. He throws himself on his knees and raises his hands and eyes to Heaven.

Immortal Gods! Venus! Galatea! Oh illusion of a frenzied love!

GALATEA, *touches herself and says.*
Me.

PYGMALION, *enraptured.*
Me!

GALATEA, *touching herself again.*
It is Me.

PYGMALION.
Ravishing illusion that is transmitted even to my ears, ah, never leave my senses.

GALATEA, *takes several steps and touches a piece of marble.*
This is me no more.

Pygmalion, in an agitation, in raptures that he can hardly contain, follows all these movements, listens to her, observes her with a greedy attention that hardly allows him to breathe.

Galatea approaches him and looks at him.

He gets up precipitously, reaches out his arm, and looks at her with ecstasy. She puts a hand on him; he shudders, takes her hand, carries it to his heart, then covers it with ardent kisses.

GALATEA, *with a sigh.*
Ah, still me.

PYGMALION.
Yes, dear and charming object: yes, worthy masterpiece of my hands, of my heart, and of the Gods . . . it is you, it is you alone: I have given you all my being; I no longer live except through you.

LETTER TO D'ALEMBERT
AND RELATED WRITINGS

Geneva[1]

By Jean le Rond d'Alembert

The city of Geneva is situated on two hills at the end of the lake which today bears its name but which was formerly called Lake Leman. The site is most agreeable; on one side the lake is to be seen, on the other, the Rhone; in the surroundings, a smiling countryside; along the lake, slopes covered with country houses; and a few leagues away, the ever snowy peaks of the Alps, which seem to be mountains of silver when the sun shines on them on fair days. The port of Geneva on the lake, with its jetties, boats, and markets, and its position between France, Italy, and Germany, make it rich, commercial, and full of skills and industry. There are many fine buildings and agreeable walks; the streets are lighted at night, and they have constructed a very simple pumping machine on the Rhone which supplies water up to the highest sections, at an elevation of one hundred feet. The lake is about eighteen leagues long and four to five in breadth at its widest. It is a sort of little sea which has its tempests and which produces other singular phenomena.

Julius Caesar speaks about Geneva as a city of the Allobroges, then a Roman province; he went there to combat the crossing of the Helvetians, who have since been named the Swiss. When Christianity was introduced into this city, it became an episcopal seat, a suffragan of Vienna. At the beginning of the fifth century the emperor Honorius ceded it to the Burgundians, who were ousted in 534 by the Frankish kings. When Charlemagne, toward the end of the ninth century, went to fight the kings of the Lombards and deliver the pope, who handsomely rewarded him for it with the imperial crown, that prince stopped at Geneva and made it the meeting place for his army. The city was afterwards annexed by inheritance to the German empire, and Conrad went there to take the imperial crown in 1034. But, since the emperors who succeeded him were occupied for three hundred years with the very important troubles which the popes stirred up for them and had neglected to keep an eye on Geneva, it gradually shook off the yoke and became an imperial city which had its bishop for prince or, rather, for lord; for the authority of the bishop was tempered by that of the citizens. The coat of arms which it took at this time expressed this mixed constitution; there was on one side an imperial

eagle and on the other a key representing the power of the Church, with this motto, *Post tenebras lux.*[2] The city of Geneva kept its arms after having renounced the Roman Church; they have nothing more in common with the papacy than the key they have in their escutcheon; it is even rather surprising that they should have kept them after having, as it were, superstitiously broken all the ties they had with Rome. They apparently thought that the motto, *Post tenebras lux,* which expresses perfectly, so they believe, their present state in regard to religion, permitted them to change nothing in their coat of arms.

The dukes of Savoy, neighbors of Geneva sometimes supported by the bishops, tried on different occasions to establish their authority gradually in this city; but it resisted courageously, sustained by the alliance of Freiburg and Bern. It was then, that is to say around 1526, that the Council of the Two Hundred was established. The opinions of Luther and Zwingli began to be introduced; Bern had adopted them; Geneva was tasting them; it admitted them in 1535; the papacy was abolished; and the bishop, who still assumes the title of Bishop of Geneva without having any more jurisdiction there than the bishop of Babylon has in his diocese, resides at Annecy since that time.

A Latin inscription in memory of the abolition of the Catholic religion is still to be seen between the two doors of the Geneva town hall. The pope is called the Antichrist in it; this expression, in which the fanaticism of liberty and novelty indulged itself during a still semi-barbaric age, seems to us hardly worthy today of a city so philosophic. We dare to request it to substitute for this insulting and crude memorial a truer, nobler, and simpler inscription. For the Catholics, the pope is the head of the true Church; for the wise and moderate Protestants, he is a sovereign whom they respect as a prince without obeying him; but in an age such as ours, he is no longer the Antichrist for anyone.

Geneva, in order to defend its liberty against the enterprises of the dukes of Savoy and its bishops, fortified itself with the alliance of Zurich and especially with that of France. It is with this aid that it resisted the arms of Charles-Emmanuel and the riches of Philip II, that prince whose ambition, despotism, cruelty, and superstition assure to his memory the execration of posterity. Henry IV, who had aided Geneva with three hundred soldiers, soon afterwards had need himself of its aid; Geneva was not useless to him at the time of the League, and on other occasions; and out of this have issued the privileges which the Genevans enjoy in France like the Swiss.

These people, wishing to make their city celebrated, called Calvin, who enjoyed with justice a great reputation, man of letters of the first

order, writing in Latin as well as one can in a dead language, and in French with a singular purity for his time; that purity, which our grammarians still admire today, makes his writings quite superior to almost all those of the same age, as the works of the gentlemen of Port-Royal are still distinguished today, for the same reason, from the barbaric rhapsodies of their adversaries and contemporaries. Calvin, able jurisconsult and theologian as enlightened as a heretic can be, set up in concert with the magistrates a collection of civil and ecclesiastical laws which was approved by the people in 1543 and which has become the fundamental code of the republic. The superfluous ecclesiastical riches, which had served before the Reformation for the support of the bishops' luxury and that of their subordinates, were applied to the foundation of a poorhouse, a college, and an academy; but the wars which Geneva had to bear for nearly sixty years kept the arts and commerce as well as the sciences from flourishing there. Finally, the ill success of the scaling of the walls [*escalade*] attempted by the Duke of Savoy marked the beginning of this republic's tranquillity. The Genevans repulsed their enemies, who had attacked them by surprise; and, to give the Duke of Savoy a distaste for such enterprises, they hanged thirteen of the principal enemy generals. They thought they could treat men who had attacked their city without declaration of war like highway robbers; for this singular and new policy, which consists in making war without having declared it, was not yet known in Europe; and, although it has been practiced by the big states since then, it is too prejudicial to the little ones ever to be to their taste.

Duke Charles-Emmanuel, seeing himself repulsed and his generals hanged, gave up trying to seize Geneva. His example served as a lesson to his successors; and since that time this city has not ceased to increase its population, to enrich itself, and to adorn itself in the midst of peace. Some civil dissensions, the last of which broke out in 1738, have from time to time slightly troubled the tranquillity of the republic; but everything has been happily pacified by the mediation of France and the confederated cantons; and external security is more strongly established than ever by two new treaties, one with France in 1749, the other with the king of Sardinia in 1754.

It is a very remarkable thing that a city which numbers hardly twenty-four thousand souls and whose outlying lands do not contain thirty villages, is nevertheless a sovereign state and one of the most flourishing cities of Europe. Rich in its liberty and its commerce, it often sees everything in flames around it without ever feeling them; the events which agitate Europe are for it only a spectacle which it enjoys without taking part; attached to the French by its alliances and by its commerce, to the

English by its commerce and religion, it pronounces with impartiality on the justice of the wars which these two powerful nations make against one another, although it is otherwise too prudent to take any part in these wars; it judges all the sovereigns of Europe without flattering them, without wounding them, and without fearing them.

The city is well fortified, especially on the side of that prince it fears the most, the king of Sardinia. On the side of France it is practically open and without defense. But military service is performed there as in a warlike city; the arsenals and magazines are well supplied; every citizen is a solider there as in Switzerland and ancient Rome. The Genevans are permitted to serve in foreign armies; but the state furnishes no power with official companies and tolerates no recruitment in its territory.

Although the city is rich, the state is poor because of the repugnance that the people manifest for new taxes, even the least onerous. The revenue of the state does not attain five hundred thousand pounds in French money; but the admirable economy with which it is administered provides for everything and even produces sums in reserve for extraordinary needs.

There is a distinction among four orders of persons in Geneva: the citizens, who are the sons of townsmen and are born in the city; they alone can enter the magistracy; the townsmen, who are sons of townsmen or citizens but are born in foreign countries, or foreigners who have acquired the right to be townsmen, which the magistrates can confer; they belong to the General Council and even to the Grand Council called the Two Hundred. The inhabitants are foreigners who have permission from the magistrates to live in the city but who can do nothing else in it. Finally, the natives are sons of the inhabitants; they have some more privileges than their fathers but they are excluded from the government.

At the head of the republic are four syndics who can hold the office for only one year and cannot return to it before four years. To the syndics is joined the small council composed of twenty councillors, a treasurer, and two secretaries of state, and another body called the judicial council. The daily affairs which demand dispatch, whether criminal or civil, are the object of these two bodies.

The grand council is composed of two hundred fifty citizens or townsmen; it is the judge of the important civil cases, it grants pardons, it strikes money, it elects the members of the small council, it deliberates on what ought to be brought before the general council. This general council embraces the entire citizen body except for those who are not yet twenty-five, bankrupt individuals, and those who have had some disgrace. The legislative power belongs to this assembly as does the right of

war and peace, alliance, taxation, and the election of the principal magistrates, which takes place in the cathedral with great order and propriety although the number of voters is around fifteen hundred.

It can be seen from this account that the government of Geneva has all of the advantages and none of the difficulties of democracy; everything is under the direction of the syndics, everything emanates from the small council for deliberation, and everything returns to it for execution; thus it seems as if the city of Geneva took as its model that wise law of the ancient German government: *De minoribus rebus principes consultant, de majoribus omnes; ita tamen, ut ea quorum penes plebem arbitrium est, apud principes praetractentur.* (Tacit, *De Mor. German.*)[3]

The civil law of Geneva is almost entirely drawn from Roman law, with some modifications; for example, a father can leave only half of his wealth to whom he pleases; the rest is divided equally among his children. This law assures, on the one hand, the independence of the children; on the other, it forestalls the injustice of the fathers.

M. de Montesquieu rightly calls a *fine law* the one which excludes from public office the citizens who do not discharge the debts of their fathers after their death, and, so much the more, those who do not discharge their own debts.

They do not extend the degrees of kinship which prohibit marriage beyond those designated by *Leviticus;* thus, first cousins can be married to one another; but there is also no dispensation in the prohibited cases. Divorce is accorded in cases of adultery or malicious desertion, after judicial proclamations.

Criminal justice is exercised with more exactitude than rigor. Torture, already abolished in many states, and which ought to be abolished everywhere as a useless cruelty, is proscribed in Geneva; it is applied only to criminals already condemned to death, in order to discover their accomplices if it is necessary. The defendant can demand to be informed of the charges against him and can be aided by his relatives and a lawyer in pleading his case before the judges in open session. Criminal sentences are delivered by the syndics in the public place with great formality.

No hereditary dignities are recognized in Geneva; the son of a first magistrate stays lost in the crowd if he does not distinguish himself from it by his merit. Neither nobility nor riches gives rank, prerogative, or facility in elevating oneself to office; intrigues are severely forbidden. The offices are so unremunerative that they cannot excite cupidity; they can only tempt noble souls because of the respect which attaches to them.

There are few lawsuits; most are conciliated by common friends, even by the lawyers, and by the judges.

Sumptuary laws forbid the use of jewelry and gold, limit funeral expenses, and oblige all the citizens to go on foot in the streets; there are carriages only for the country. These laws, which would be regarded in France as too severe and almost as barbarous and inhuman, are not at all destructive of the true comforts of life which can always be gotten at small cost; they only curtail ostentation, which does not contribute to happiness and which ruins men without being useful.

There is no city where there are more happy marriages; Geneva is on this point two hundred years ahead of our morals. Because of the regulations against luxury they are not afraid of having many children; thus luxury is not, as in France, one of the great obstacles to population.

The drama is not tolerated at Geneva. It is not that they disapprove of the theater in itself; but they fear, it is said, the taste for adornment, dissipation, and libertinism which the actors' troops disseminate among the youth. However, would it not be possible to remedy this difficulty with laws that are severe and well administered concerning the conduct of the actors? In this way Geneva would have the theater and morals and would enjoy the advantages of both; the theatrical performances would form the taste of the citizens and would give them a fineness of tact, a delicacy of sentiments, which is very difficult to acquire without the help of theatrical performances; literature would profit without the progress of libertinism, and Geneva would join to the prudence of Lacedaemon the urbanity of Athens. Another consideration, worthy of a republic so prudent and so enlightened, ought perhaps to oblige it to permit the theater. The barbarous prejudice against the actor's profession, the sort of abasement in which we have placed these men so necessary to the progress and support of the arts, is certainly one of the principal causes which contribute to the dissoluteness for which we reproach them. They seek to compensate themselves with pleasure for the esteem which their estate cannot win for them. Among us, an actor with morals is doubly to be respected, but we hardly take notice of him. The tax-farmer who insults public indigence and feeds himself from it, the courtier who crawls and does not pay his debts, these are the sorts of men we honor the most. If the actors were not only tolerated at Geneva but were first restrained by wise regulations, then protected and even respected when they had earned such respect, and, finally, placed absolutely on the same level as the other citizens, this city would soon have the advantage of possessing what is thought to be so rare and is so only through our fault: a company of actors worthy of esteem. Let us add that this company would soon become Europe's best; many persons, full of taste and capacity for the theater and who fear being dishonored among us if they devoted themselves to it, would flock to

Geneva to cultivate, not only without shame but even with esteem, a talent so agreeable and so infrequent. This city, which many Frenchmen consider dull because they are deprived of the theater, would then become the seat of decent pleasures, just as it is now the seat of philosophy and liberty; and foreigners would no longer be surprised to see that in a city where proper and correct theater is forbidden, coarse and silly farces as contrary to good taste as to good morals are permitted. This is not all: little by little the example of Geneva's actors, the correctness of their conduct and the respect which it would cause them to enjoy, would serve as a model to the actors of other nations and as a lesson to those who have treated them until now with so much severity and even inconsistency. One would no longer see them, on the one hand, being pensioned by the government and, on the other, as objects of anathema; our priests would lose the habit of excommunicating them, and our men of the middle class of regarding them with contempt; and a little republic would have the glory of having reformed Europe on this point, which is perhaps more important than is thought.

Geneva has a university called the academy where the young are taught without payment. The professors can become magistrates and, indeed, many have done so, which does a great deal to stimulate the emulation and celebrity of the academy. Some years ago a school of drawing was established. The lawyers, the notaries, and the doctors form bodies in which one can be licensed only after public examinations; and all the handicraft guilds also have their regulations, their apprenticeships, and their masterpieces.

The public library is well stocked; it contains twenty-six thousand volumes and a rather large number of manuscripts. These books are loaned to all the citizens; thus everyone reads and is enlightened; hence, the people are better educated in Geneva than anywhere else. It has not been observed that this is an evil as it is claimed it would be in our country. Perhaps the Genevans and our statesmen are both right.

After England, Geneva was the first to accept vaccination for smallpox, vaccination which has such difficulty getting established in France but which will, nevertheless, be established there although many of our physicians still fight it, as their predecessors fought the circulation of the blood, emetics, and so many other incontestable truths or useful practices.

All the sciences and almost all the arts have been so well cultivated in Geneva that one would be astonished to see the list of the scientists and artists of all sorts that this city has produced in the last two hundred years. It has even sometimes had the advantage of possessing some celebrated foreigners who have been drawn to retire there by its agreeable

situation and the liberty which is enjoyed. M. de Voltaire, who established his residence there four years ago, finds among these republicans the same marks of esteem and respect he has received from many monarchs.

The most flourishing industry at Geneva is watchmaking; it employs more than five thousand persons, that is to say, more than a fifth of the citizens. The other arts are not neglected, among them agriculture. The land's lack of fertility is compensated for by dint of care and work.

All the houses are built of stone, which very often prevents fires, which are, by the way, promptly extinguished by the excellent organization established for the purpose.

The poorhouses in Geneva are not as elsewhere, simply refuges for the sick and infirm poor; hospitality is extended to poor transients; but, more important, a number of little pensions are drawn from it which are distributed to poor families to help them to live without moving and without giving up their work. The poorhouses spend more than triple their income every year, so abundant is charity of all sorts.

The religion of Geneva remains for us to talk about. It is the part of this article which perhaps most interests philosophers. We are now going to discuss this particular; but we beg our readers to remember that we are here only historians, not controversialists. Our articles on theology are destined to serve as antidotes to this one, and to recount here is not to approve. We refer our readers, then, to the words, *Eucharist, Hell, Faith, Christianity,* etc., in order to fortify them in advance against what we are going to say.

The ecclesiastical constitution of Geneva is purely presbyterian: no bishops, even fewer canons; it is not that they disapprove of the episcopate, but rather, since they do not believe in divine right, that it was thought that pastors less rich and less important than bishops were more appropriate to a little republic.

The ministers are either pastors like our curés, or postulants, like our priests without a living. The revenue of the pastors does not exceed twelve hundred pounds, without any surplice fees. The state pays them, for the Church has nothing. The ministers are accepted only when they are twenty-four, after very rigid examinations of their learning and their morals, the example of which it would be desirable for most of our Catholic churches to follow.

The ecclesiastics have nothing to do at funerals; it is a purely civil act which is carried out without pomp; they believe in Geneva that it is ridiculous to be ostentatious after death. They bury in a vast cemetery rather distant from the city, a practice which should be followed elsewhere. The clergy of Geneva has exemplary morals; the ministers live in

harmony; they are not seen, as in other countries, disputing with bitterness among themselves about unintelligible matters, persecuting one another mutually, indecently accusing one another before the magistrates. They are, however, far from all thinking the same on the articles which are elsewhere regarded as the most important to religion. Many do not believe any more in the divinity of Jesus Christ, of which their leader Calvin was so zealous a defender and for which he had Servet burned. When one speaks to them about this torture, which does some injustice to the charity and moderation of their patriarch, they limit themselves, if it is a Catholic speaking to them, to opposing the torture of Servet to the abominable St. Bartholomew's day which every good Frenchman desires to blot out from our history with his blood; and the torture of John Hus which the Catholics themselves, they say, no longer undertake to justify, in which humanity and good faith were equally violated, and which ought to cover the name of the Emperor Sigismund with eternal opprobrium.

"It is no small example of the progress of human reason," says M. de Voltaire, "that they could print in Geneva, with public approval (in the *Essay on Universal History* of that author) that Calvin had an odious soul as well as an enlightened mind. The murder of Servet today seems abominable." We believe that the praises owed this noble freedom to think and to write should be evenly divided among the author, his age, and Geneva. How many countries there are in which philosophy has made no less progress, but in which reason does not dare to raise its voice to strike down what it condemns in silence, in which too many pusillanimous writers, who are called prudent, respect prejudices which they could combat with as much propriety as security.

Hell, one of the principal points of our belief, is today no longer one for many of Geneva's ministers; it would, according to them, insult the Divinity to imagine that this Being, full of goodness and justice, was capable of punishing our faults by an eternity of torments. They interpret as well as they can the explicit passages which are contrary to their opinion, claiming that one must never take literally, in the holy books, everything which seems to wound humanity and reason. They believe, hence, that there are punishments in another life, but for a time; thus purgatory, which was one of the principal causes of the separation of the Protestants from the Roman Church, is today the only punishment many of them admit after death; here is a new touch to add to the history of human contradictions.

To sum up in a word, many of Geneva's pastors have no religion other than a complete Socinianism, rejecting all those things which are called

mysteries, and imagining that the first principle of a true religion is to propose nothing to belief which offends reason; so that when one presses them on the *necessity* of revelation, that dogma so essential to Christianity, many substitute for it the term *utility,* which seems to them milder; in that, if they are not orthodox, they are at least consequent with their principles.

A clergy which thinks thus ought to be tolerant, and it is actually tolerant enough not to be well viewed by the ministers of the other Reformed churches. It can be said, moreover, without intending to approve of Geneva's religion otherwise, that there are few countries in which the theologians and the ecclesiastics are more hostile to superstition. And, as a result, since intolerance and superstition only serve to increase the number of disbelievers, they complain less at Geneva than elsewhere of the progress of disbelief. This is not surprising, since religion has been practically reduced to the adoration of a single God, at least among all those not of the common classes; the respect for Jesus Christ and the Scripture is perhaps the only thing which distinguishes the Christianity of Geneva from a pure deism.

The ecclesiastics do what is even better than being tolerant; they limit themselves strictly to their duties in being the first to give to the citizens the example of submission to the laws. The consistory, established to watch over morals, administers only spiritual punishments. The great quarrel between the priesthood and the state, which in ages of ignorance shook the crowns of so many emperors and which, as we know only too well, causes disagreeable troubles in more enlightened ages, is not known in Geneva; the clergy does nothing without the approval of the magistrates.

Worship is very simple; no images, no candelabra, no ornaments in the churches. They have, however, just put a door in rather good taste on the cathedral; perhaps they will, little by little, come to the decoration of the interiors of the temples. What would really be wrong with having paintings and statues while warning the people, if one pleases, not to worship them and to regard them only as monuments established for the purpose of relating in a striking and agreeable way the principal events of religion? The arts would gain by it without superstition's profiting. We speak here in terms of the principles of the Genevan pastors and not in terms of those of the Catholic Church.

The divine service contains two things: sermons and singing. The sermons are limited almost entirely to morality and are only the better for it. The singing is in rather bad taste; and the French verses they sing are even worse. It is to be hoped that Geneva will reform herself on these

two points. An organ has just been put in the cathedral, and perhaps they will progress to the point of praising God in better language and with better music. Otherwise, the truth obliges us to say that the Supreme Being is honored in Geneva with a propriety and calm correctness not to be found in our churches.

We will perhaps not give such long articles to the vastest monarchies; but, in the eyes of the philosopher, the republic of the bees is not less interesting than the history of great empires; it is perhaps only in little states that one can find the model for a perfect political administration. If religion does not permit us to think that the Genevans have effectively worked toward their happiness in the other world, reason obliges us to believe that they are pretty nearly as happy as anyone can be in this one:

O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint.[4]

J. J. ROUSSEAU
CITIZEN OF GENEVA

TO M. D'ALEMBERT
Of the French Academy, The Royal Academy of Sciences of Paris, the Prussian Academy, the Royal Society of London, the Royal Academy of Literature of Sweden, and the Institute of Bologna;

On his Article GENEVA
In the seventh volume of *l'Encyclopédie,*
AND ESPECIALLY
On the project of establishing a
DRAMATIC Theater in that City

Di meliora piis, erroremque hostibus illum.[1]

AT AMSTERDAM

By MARC MICHEL REY,
M. DCC. LVIII.

Letter to d'Alembert on the Theater

PREFACE.

I am at fault if I have on this occasion taken up my pen without necessity. It can be neither advantageous nor agreeable for me to attack M. d'Alembert. I respect his person; I admire his talents; I like his works; I am aware of the good things he has said of my country. Honored myself by his praises, I am in all decency obliged to every sort of consideration for him. But consideration outweighs duty only with those for whom all morality consists in appearances. Justice and truth are man's first duties; humanity and fatherland his first affections. Every time that private considerations cause him to change this order, he is culpable. Could I be culpable in doing what I ought? To answer me one must have a Fatherland to serve and more love for his duties than fear of men's displeasure.

Since not everybody has *l'Encyclopédie* before his eyes, I shall here transcribe the passage from the article GENEVA which placed the pen in my hand. The article would have caused the pen to fall from my hand if I aspired to the honor of writing well. But I dare seek another honor in which I fear no one's competition. In reading this passage by itself, more than one reader will be astonished by the zeal which seems to have inspired it; in reading it in the context of the whole Article, he will find that the Theater which is not at Geneva, and could be there, takes up one-eighth as much space as do the things which are there.

The Drama[2] is not tolerated at Geneva. It is not that they disapprove of the Theater in itself; but they fear, it is said, the taste for adornment, dissipation, and libertinism which the Actors' troops disseminate among the youth. However, would it not be possible to remedy this difficulty with laws that are severe and well administered concerning the conduct of the Actors? In this way Geneva would have the Theater and morals[3] and would enjoy the advantages of both; the theatrical performances would form the taste of the citizens and would give them a fineness of tact, a delicacy of sentiments, which is very difficult to acquire without the help of theatrical performances; literature would profit without the progress of libertinism, and Geneva would join to the prudence of Lacedaemon the urbanity of Athens. Another consideration, worthy of a Republic so prudent and so enlightened, ought perhaps to oblige it to permit the Theater. The barbarous prejudice against the Actor's profession, the sort of abasement in which we have placed these men so necessary to the progress and support of the arts, is certainly one of the principal causes which contribute to the dissoluteness for

which we reproach them. They seek to compensate themselves with pleasure for the esteem which their estate cannot win for them. Among us, an Actor with morals is doubly to be respected, but we hardly take notice of him. The Tax-farmer who insults public indigence and feeds himself from it, the Courtier who crawls and does not pay his debts, these are the sorts of men we honor the most. If the Actors were not only tolerated at Geneva but were first restrained by wise regulations, then protected and even respected when they had earned such respect, and, finally, placed absolutely on the same level as the other Citizens, this city would soon have the advantage of possessing what is thought to be so rare and is so only through our fault: a company of Actors worthy of esteem. Let us add that this company would soon become Europe's best; many persons, full of taste and capacity for the theater and who fear being dishonored among us if they devoted themselves to it, would flock to Geneva to cultivate, not only without shame but even with esteem, a talent so agreeable and so infrequent. This city, which many Frenchmen consider dull because they are deprived of the theater, would then become the seat of decent pleasures, just as it is now the seat of philosophy and liberty; and Foreigners would no longer be surprised to see that in a city where proper and correct theater is forbidden, coarse and silly farces as contrary to good taste as to good morals are permitted. This is not all: little by little the example of Geneva's Actors, the correctness of their conduct and the respect which it would cause them to enjoy, would serve as a model to the Actors of other nations and as a lesson to those who have treated them until now with so much severity and even inconsistency. One would no longer see them, on the one hand, being pensioned by the government and, on the other, as objects of anathema; our Priests would lose the habit of excommunicating them, and our men of the middle class of regarding them with contempt; and a little Republic would have the glory of having reformed Europe on this point, which is perhaps more important than is thought.

This is certainly the most agreeable and seductive picture that could be offered us, but is, at the same time, the most dangerous advice that could be given us. At least, such is my sentiment, and my reasons are in this Writing. With what avidity will the young of Geneva, swept away by so weighty an authority, give themselves to ideas for which they already have only too great a penchant? Since the publication of this Volume, how many young Genevans, otherwise good Citizens, are waiting for the moment to promote the establishment of a theater, believing that they are rendering a service to their fatherland and, almost, to humankind? This is the subject of my alarm; this is the ill that I would fend off. I do justice to the intentions of M. d'Alembert; I hope he will do the same in regard to mine. I have no more desire to displease him than he to do us injury. But, finally, even if mistaken, must I not act and speak according to my conscience and my lights? Ought I to have remained silent? Could I have, without betraying my duty and my fatherland?

To have the right to remain silent on this occasion, I should need never to have raised my pen for subjects less necessary. Sweet obscurity, which was for thirty years my happiness, I should need always to have

known how to love thee. It would have to be unknown that I have had some relations with the Editors of *l'Encyclopédie,* that I have furnished some articles for the Work, that my name is to be found with those of the authors. My zeal for my country would have to be less known, and it would be necessary that others supposed that the article *Geneva* had escaped my attention or that they could not infer from my silence that I adhere to its contents. Since none of this is possible, I must then speak; I must disavow what I cannot at all approve, so that sentiments other than my own cannot be imputed to me. My compatriots have no need of my advice; I know it well. But I have need to do myself honor in showing that I think as they do about our maxims.

I am not unaware that this writing, so far from what it ought to be, is far even from what I could have done in happier days. So many things have concurred to put it beneath the mediocrity to which I could in the past attain that I am surprised that it is not even worse. I wrote for my fatherland; if it were true that zeal takes the place of talent, I would have done better than ever; but I have seen what needed to be done, and could not bring it to execution. I have spoken the truth coldly; who cares for the truth? Dreary recommendation for a Book! To be useful, one must be charming, and my pen has lost that art. Some will malignantly contest this loss. Be that as it may; nevertheless, I feel that I am fallen, and one cannot sink beneath nothingness.

In the first place, I am not dealing here with vain Philosophical chatter but with a practical truth important to a whole people. I do not speak here to the few but to the public, nor do I attempt to make others think but rather to explain my thought clearly. Hence, I had to change my style. To make myself better understood by everyone, I have said fewer things with more words; and wanting to be clear and simple, I have found myself loose and diffuse.

At first I counted on one or two printed pages at the very most. I began in a hurry and, my subject expanding itself under my pen, I let it go without constraint. I was sick and melancholy, and although I had great need of distraction, I felt myself so little in a state to think or write that, if the idea of a duty to fulfil had not sustained me, I would have thrown my paper in the fire a hundred times. As a result I became less severe with myself. I sought some enjoyment in my work that I might bear it. I plunged myself into every digression which presented itself, without foreseeing to what extent I, in relieving my boredom, was perhaps providing for that of the reader.

Taste, selectiveness, and correctness are not to be found in this work. Living alone, I have not been able to show it to anyone. I had an

Aristarchus,[4] severe and judicious. I have him no more; I want him no more;* but I will regret him unceasingly, and my heart misses him even more than my Writings.

Solitude calms the soul and appeases the passions born of the disorder of the world. Far from the vices which irritate us, we speak of them with less indignation; far from the ills which touch us, our hearts are less moved by them. Since I see men no more, I have almost stopped hating the wicked. Moreover, the ill they have done me deprives me of the right to speak ill of them. Henceforth, I must pardon them so as not to resemble them. I would substitute unawares the love of justice for the love of vengeance. It is better to forget all. I hope that that bitterness will no longer be found for which I was reproached but which caused me to be read; I agree to be less read, provided that I live in peace.

To these reasons is added another and yet crueler one that I would in vain like to hide; the public would sense it only too well in spite of me. If among the essays issued from my pen this paper is even beneath the others, it is less the fault of circumstances than of myself; I am beneath myself. The ills of the body exhaust the soul; by dint of suffering it loses its vitality. A fleeting moment of fermentation produced a certain glimmer of talent in me. It manifested itself late, and it has extinguished itself early. In returning to my natural state, I have gone back to nothingness. I had only a moment; it is past. It is my shame to outlive myself. Reader, if you receive this last work with indulgence, you will be welcoming my shade, for, as for me, I am no more.

Montmorenci, March 20, 1758

**Ad amicum etsi produxeris gladitem, non desperes; est enim regressus ad amicum. Si aperueris os triste, non timeas: est enim concordatio: excepto convitio; et improperio, et superbia, et mysterii revelatione, et plaga dolosa. In his omnibus effugiet amicus* (Ecclesiasticus XXII, 26–27).[5]

J.-J. ROUSSEAU CITIZEN OF GENEVA TO MONSIEUR D'ALEMBERT

I have read, Sir, with pleasure your article, *Geneva,* in the 7th volume of *l'Encyclopédie.* In rereading it with even more pleasure, it has provided me with some reflections I thought I could offer, under your auspices, to the public and my fellow citizens. There is much to commend in this article; but, if the praises with which you have honored my Fatherland deprive me of the right to make return in kind, my sincerity will speak for me; not to be of your opinion on some points is to make myself clear enough about the others.

I shall begin with what is for me most repugnant to treat and the consideration of which is least appropriate for me, but about which, for the reason I have just mentioned, silence is not permitted me. this is the judgment that you make about the doctrine of our Ministers in the matter of faith.[6] You have praised this worthy body in a way that is very fair, very true, and appropriate to it alone among all the Clergies of the world, in a way which yet increases the respect for you of which they have given witness; you have praised them, showing that they love Philosophy and do not fear the eye of the Philosopher. But, Sir, when one wishes to honor people, it must be done after their fashion and not our own, lest, with reason, they be offended by harmful praises which, for all that they are given with good intention, nonetheless do damage to the estate, the interests, the opinions, or the prejudices of those who are their object. Are you unaware that every Sectarian name is always odious and that such imputations, rarely without consequence for the Laity, are never so for Theologians?

You will tell me that it is a question of facts and not praises and that the Philosopher has more respect for the truth than for men. But this pretended truth is not so clear or so indifferent that you have the right to advance it without good authorities; and I do not see on what one could found oneself to prove that the sentiments that a group professes and according to which it acts are not its own. You will tell me next that you do not attribute the sentiments of which you speak to the whole ecclesiastical body. But you do attribute them to many; and many, in a small number, always compose such a large part that the whole must be affected by them.

Many Pastors of Geneva have, according to you, only a complete Socinianism.[7] This is what you declare boldly to the face of Europe. I dare to ask you how you learned it? It can only be from your own conjectures or from the witness of others or from the confession of the Pastors in question.

Now, in matters of pure dogma, which have nothing at all to do with morality, how can one judge another's faith by conjecture? How can one even judge it on the assertion of a third party against that of the interested party? Who knows better than I what I do or do not believe? And to whom ought one to refer on this point other than myself? When, after having drawn sophistical and disclaimed consequences from the speeches or writings of a decent man, a fierce Priest persecutes the Author for these consequences, he is only performing his priest's profession and surprises no one. But ought we to honor virtuous men the way a knave persecutes them? And will the Philosopher imitate the captious reasonings of which he was so often the victim?

There remains then the possibility that those of our Pastors whom you allege to be complete Socinians and to reject eternal punishments have confided their private sentiments on this score to you. But if this were really their sentiment and they had confided it to you, they certainly would have told you in secret, in the decent and frank expansiveness of philosophic intercourse; they would have said it to the Philosopher and not to the Author. They did nothing of the sort, and my proof is without reply: it is that you published it.

I do not claim, for that, either to judge or to blame the doctrine that you impute to them; I say only that one has no right to impute it to them, at least unless they admit it; and, I add, that it does not resemble the one in which they instruct us at all. I do not know what Socinianism is, so that I can speak neither well nor ill of it (and, indeed, from a few confused notions of this sect and its founder, I feel more disinclination than taste for it.).[8] But, in general, I am the friend of every peaceful Religion in which the Eternal Being is served according to the reason he gave us. When a man cannot believe what he finds absurd, it is not his fault; it is that of his reason.* And how shall I conceive that God would punish

*I think I see a principle, which, well demonstrated as it could be, would immediately wrest the arms from the hands of the intolerant and the superstitious and would calm that proselytizing fury which seems to animate the unbelievers. This is that human reason has no well-determined common measure and that it is unjust for any man to give his own as the rule to that of others.

Let us suppose good faith, without which all disputation is only cackle. Up to a certain point there are common principles, a common evidence, and in addition, each has his own reason which determines him; thus this sentiment does not lead to scepticism; but also, since the general limits of reason are not fixed and no one can inspect another's, here, with one stroke, the proud dogmatist is stopped. If ever peace could be established where interest, pride, and opinionation now reign, thereby the dissensions of the Priests and the Philosophers would finally end. But perhaps it would be to the advantage of neither the one nor the other; there would be neither persecutions nor disputations any more; the former would have no one to torment, the latter no one to convince: one might as well leave the trade.

If I should be asked why then I myself dispute, I would answer that I speak to the many and that I am explaining practical truths, that I base myself on experience, that I am fulfill-

him for not having made for himself an understanding* contrary to the one he received from him? If a Learned Man came and ordered me on behalf of God to believe that the part is greater than the whole, what could I think within myself other than that this man came to order me to be mad? Certainly the Orthodox, who see no absurdity in the mysteries, are obliged to believe them. But if the Socinians find the mysteries absurd, what can be said to them? Will it be proved to them that they are not? They will begin by proving to you that it is an absurdity to reason about what cannot be understood. What to do, then? Leave them alone.

Nor am I scandalized that those who serve a merciful God reject eternal punishment if they find it incompatible with his justice. If in such cases they interpret as best they can the passages contrary to their opinion rather than abandon it, how could they do otherwise? No one is more filled than I with love and respect for the most sublime of all Books; it consoles me and instructs me every day, when other books inspire in me only disgust. But I maintain that, if the Scripture itself gave us some idea of God unworthy of him, we would have to reject it on that point, just as you reject in Geometry the demonstrations which lead to absurd conclusions. For, of whatever authenticity the Sacred text may be, it is still more believable that the Bible was altered than that God is unjust or malevolent.

These, Sir, are the reasons which would prevent me from blaming these sentiments in equitable and moderate Theologians who, by their

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filling my duty, and that, after having said what I think, I see no harm in it if my opinion is not accepted.

* It must be remembered that I am answering an Author who is not Protestant; and I believe I really answer him in showing that what he accuses our Ministers of doing would be done to no avail in our Religion and is necessarily done in many others unawares.

The intellectual world, without excepting Geometry, is full of truths incomprehensible and nevertheless incontestable; because reason, which demonstrates their existence, cannot, as it were, touch them across the limits which arrest it but can only perceive them at a distance. Such is the dogma of the existence of God; such are the mysteries admitted in the Protestant communions. The mysteries which shock reason, to employ the terms of M. d'Alembert, are an entirely different matter. Their very contradiction makes them return within the limits of reason; it has every imaginable advantage for making felt that they do not exist; for, although one cannot see an absurd thing, nothing is so clear as absurdity. This is what happens when two contradictory propositions are maintained: if you tell me that a space of one inch is also space of one foot, you do not say something that is mysterious, obscure, and incomprehensible; you assert, on the contrary, a glaring and palpable absurdity, a thing *very clearly* false. Of whatever sort the demonstrations which establish it are, they are unable to outweigh the one which undermines it, for this principle is drawn immediately from the primitive notions which serve as the basis of every human certitude. Otherwise, reason giving witness against itself would force us to renounce it. And far from making us believe this or that, it would prevent us from believing anything at all, considering that every principle of faith would be destroyed. Any man, of whatever Religion he be, who claims to believe in such mysteries is either an impostor or does not know what he says.

own doctrine, would teach that no one should be forced to adopt it. I will say more; ways of thinking so appropriate for a reasonable and feeble creature, so worthy of a just and merciful Creator, appear to me preferable to that stupid acceptance which makes an animal out of man, and to that barbarous intolerance which delights in tormenting, already in this life, those whom it destines to eternal torments in the next. In this sense, I thank you, on behalf of my Fatherland, for the spirit of philosophy and humanity that you recognize in its Clergy and for the justice you are pleased to do it. I am in agreement with you on this point. But for being humane, philosophic, and tolerant,* it does not follow that the members of the clergy are heretic. In the party name you give them, in the dogmas that you say are theirs, I can neither agree with you nor follow you. Although such a system may perhaps have nothing that does not do honor to those who adopt it, I will refrain from attributing it to my Pastors who have not adopted it, for fear that the praise I might make of it would provide others with the subject for a very grave accusation and would hurt those I had pretended to praise. Why should I take the responsibility for another's profession of faith? Have I not learned only too well to fear these rash imputations! How many people have taken the responsibility for my faith in accusing me of lacking in Religion, people who have surely read my heart very badly? I shall not tax them with lacking religion themselves. For one of the duties it imposes on me is to respect the secrets of consciences. Sir, let us judge the actions of men and leave it to God to judge of their faith.

This is perhaps too much on a point whose examination does not belong to me and which, moreover, is not the subject of this Letter. The Ministers of Geneva have no need of another's pen to defend themselves.** It is not mine that they would choose for that, and such discus-

* Concerning Christian tolerance, the chapter that bears this title can be consulted in the eleventh book of Professor Vernet's *Doctrine chrétienne*.[9] There it can be seen for what reasons the Church ought to use even more caution and circumspection in the censure of errors concerning the faith than in that of errors concerning morals, and how the gentleness of the Christian, the reason of the Wise Man, and the zeal of the Pastor are combined in the rules of this censorship.

** This is what they have just done, according to what I have been written, in a public declaration.[10] It has not yet come to me in my retreat; but I learn that the public has received it with applause. Thus not only do I have the pleasure of having been the first to do them the honor they deserve but also that of hearing my judgment unanimously confirmed. I realize that this declaration renders the beginning of my Letter entirely superfluous and in any other case would perhaps make it indiscreet. But, on the point of suppressing it, I saw that, speaking of the same article which gave occasion to the letter, the same reason still existed and that my silence could be taken for a sort of agreement. I leave, then, these reflections, so much the more willingly; for, if they are presented out of context concerning an affair that is happily ended, they contain nothing in general that is not honorable to the Church of Geneva and useful to men in all lands.

sions are too far from my inclination for me to give myself to them with pleasure. But, since I have to speak about the same article in which you attribute opinions to them which we do not know to be theirs, to remain silent about this assertion was to appear to adhere to it; and that I am very far from doing. Aware of the good fortune that we have in possessing a body of philosophic and pacific Theologians, or rather a body of officers of morality* and Ministers of virtue, I view with consternation any occasion which might cause them to descend to being mere Churchmen. It is of import for us to preserve them such as they are. It is of import for us that they themselves enjoy the peace which they make us love, and that odious disputes of Theology trouble no more either their repose or ours. It is of import for us, finally, always to learn from their lessons and their example that gentleness and humanity are also the virtues of the Christian.

I hasten to turn to a discussion that is less grave and less serious but which is still of enough concern to us to merit our reflection and which I enter into more willingly as it is somewhat more within my competence. It is that of the project to establish a Theater for the Drama at Geneva. I shall not expound here my conjectures about the motives which might have brought you to propose an establishment so contrary to our maxims. Whatever your reasons, I have here to do only with ours; and all that I shall permit myself to say with respect to you is that you will surely be the first Philosopher** who ever encouraged a free people, a small city, and a poor State to burden itself with a public Theater.[12]

How many questions I find to discuss in what you appear to have settled! Whether the Theater is good or bad in itself? Whether it can be united with morals? Whether it is in conformity with republican austerity? Whether it ought to be tolerated in a little city? Whether the Actor's profession can be a decent one? Whether Actresses can be as well behaved as other women? Whether good laws suffice for repressing the abuses? Whether these laws can be well observed? etc. Everything is sill problematic concerning the real effects of the Theater; for, since the disputes that it occasions are solely between the Men of the Church and the Men of the world, each side views the problem only through its prejudices. Here, Sir, are studies that would not be unworthy of your pen. As for me, without believing that what I might do could serve as a substitute for your efforts,

* It is thus that the Abbé de St. Pierre always called the Ecclesiastics, either to say that this is what they really are or to make clear that this is what they ought to be.

** Of two famous Historians, both philosophers, both dear to M. d'Alembert, the modern[11] would be of his opinion, perhaps; but Tacitus, whom he loves, about whom he meditates, whom he deigns to translate, the grave Tacitus, whom he quotes so willingly, and whom he sometimes imitates so well except for his obscurity, would he have agreed?

I shall limit myself in this essay to seeking those clarifications that you have made necessary. I beg you to take into consideration that in speaking my opinion in imitation of your example, I am fulfilling a duty toward my Fatherland, and that, if my sentiments are mistaken, at least this error can hurt no one.

At the first glance given to these institutions I see immediately that the Theater is a form of amusement; and if it is true that amusements are necessary to man, you will at least admit that they are only permissible insofar as they are necessary, and that every useless amusement is an evil for a Being whose life is so short and whose time is so precious. The state of man has its pleasures which are derived from his nature and are born of his labors, his relations, and his needs. And these pleasures, sweeter to the one who tastes them in the measure that his soul is healthier, make whoever is capable of participating in them indifferent to all others. A Father, a son, a Husband, and a Citizen have such cherished duties to fulfil that they are left nothing to give to boredom. The good use of time makes time even more precious, and the better one puts it to use, the less one can find to lose. Thus it is constantly seen that the habit of work renders inactivity intolerable and that a good conscience extinguishes the taste for frivolous pleasures. But it is discontent with one's self, the burden of idleness, the neglect of simple and natural tastes, that makes foreign amusement so necessary. I do not like the need to occupy the heart constantly with the Stage as if it were ill at ease inside of us. Nature itself dictated the response of that Barbarian* to whom were vaunted the magnificences of the circus and the games established at Rome. "Don't the Romans," asked this fellow, "have wives or children?" The Barbarian was right. People think they come together in the Theater, and it is there that they are isolated. It is there that they go to forget their friends, neighbors, and relations in order to concern themselves with fables, in order to cry for the misfortunes of the dead, or to laugh at the expense of the living. But I should have sensed that this language is no longer seasonable in our times. Let us try to find another which is better understood.

To ask if the Theater is good or bad in itself is to pose too vague a question; it is to examine a relation before having defined the terms. The Theater is made for the people, and it is only by its effects on the people that one can determine its absolute qualities. There can be all sorts of Entertainment.** There is, from People to People, a prodigious diversity

* Chrysost. in Matth. Homel, 38.

** "There can be entertainments blameable in themselves, like those which are inhuman or indecent and licentious; such were some of the pagan entertainments. But there are also some which are indifferent in themselves and only become bad through their abuse. For example, theatrical plays are not objectionable insofar as in them descriptions are to be found

of morals, temperaments, and characters. Man is one; I admit it! But man modified by Religions, Governments, laws, customs, prejudices, and climates becomes so different from himself that one ought not to seek among us for what is good for men in general, but only what is good for them in this time or that country. Thus the plays of Menander, made for the Athenian theater, were out of place in Rome's. Thus the Gladiatorial combats which, during the Republic, animated the courage and valor of the Romans, only inspired the population of Rome, under the Emperors, with the love of blood and cruelty. The same object offered to the same People at different times taught men at first to despise their own lives and, later, to make sport of the lives of others.

The sorts of Entertainment are determined necessarily by the pleasure they give and not by their utility. If utility is there too, so much the better. But the principal object is to please; and, provided that the People enjoy themselves, this object is sufficiently attained. This alone will always prevent our being able to give these sorts of institutions all the advantages they are susceptible of; and it is a gross self-deception to form an idea of perfection for them that could not be put into practice without putting off those whom one wants to instruct. It is from this that is born the diversity of Entertainments according to the diverse tastes of nations. An intrepid, grave, and cruel People wants deadly and perilous festivals in which valor and composure shine. A ferocious and intense People wants blood, combat, and terrible passions. A voluptuous People wants music and dances. A gallant[14] People wants love and civility. A frivolous People wants joking and ridicule. *Trahit sua quemque voluptas.*[15] To please them, there must be Entertainments which promote their penchants, whereas what is needed are entertainments which would moderate them.

The Stage is, in general, a painting of the human passions, the original of which is in every heart. But if the Painter neglected to flatter these passions, the Spectators would soon be repelled and would not want to see themselves in a light which made them despise themselves. So that, if he gives an odious coloring to some passions, it is only to those that are not general and are naturally hated. Hence the Author, in this respect, only

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of the characters and actions of men, where agreeable and useful lessons for every station in life can even be presented. But if an easygoing morality is retailed in them; if the people who exercise this profession lead a licentious life and serve to corrupt others; if such shows support vanity, idleness, luxury, and lewdness, it is evident that the thing turns into an abuse; and unless a way is found to correct these abuses or to protect ourselves from them, it is better to give up this form of amusement." (*Instruction chrétienne,*[13] Vol. III, Book iii, ch. 16)

This is the state of the question when it is well posed. What must be known is whether the morality of the Theater is necessarily easygoing, whether the abuses are inevitable, whether its difficulties are derived from the nature of the thing or whether they come from causes that can be set aside.

follows public sentiment. And then, these repulsive passions are always used to set off others, if not more legitimate, at least more to the liking of the Spectators. It is only reason that is good for nothing on the Stage. A man without passions or who always mastered them could not attract anyone. And it has already been observed that a Stoic in Tragedy would be an insufferable figure. In Comedy he would, at most, cause laughter.

Let no one then attribute to the theater the power to change sentiments or morals, which it can only follow and embellish. An Author who would brave the general taste would soon write for himself alone. When Molière transformed the comic Stage, he attacked modes and ridiculous traits. But, for all of that, he did not shock the public's taste.* He followed or expanded on it, just as Corneille, on his part did. It was the old theater which was beginning to shock this taste, because, in an age grown more refined, the theater preserved its initial coarseness. So, also, the general taste having changed since the time of these two Authors, if their masterpieces were now to be presented for the first time, they would inevitably fail. The connoisseurs can very well admire them forever; if the public still admires them, it is more for shame at recanting than from a real sentiment for their beauties. It is said that a good Play never fails. Indeed, I believe it; this is because a good play never shocks the morals** of its time. Who doubts that the best Play of Sophocles would fall flat in our Theater? We would be unable to put ourselves in the places of men who are totally dissimilar to us.

Any Author who wants to depict alien morals for us nevertheless takes great pains to make his play correspond to our morals. Without this precaution, one never succeeds, and even the success of those who have taken it often has grounds very different from those supposed by a superficial observer. If the *Arlequin sauvage*[16] is so well received by Audiences, is it thought that this is a result of their taste for the character's sense and simplicity, or that a single one of them would want to resemble him? It is,

*Although he anticipated public taste by only a bit, Molière himself had difficulty in succeeding; the most perfect of his works failed at its birth because he presented it too soon and the public was not yet ripe for the *Misanthrope*.

All of this is founded on an evident maxim, i.e., that a people often follows practices which it despises or which it is ready to despise as soon as someone dares to set the example for it. When, in my day, the Puppet rage was ridiculed, what was said in the theater was only the reflection of what was thought by even those who spent their days at that silly amusement. But the constant tastes of a people, its customs, its old prejudices, ought to be respected on the stage. Never has a Poet come off well who violated this law.

**I say the tastes or morals indifferently. For although the one is not the other, they always have a common origin and undergo the same revolutions. This does not imply that good taste and good morals always reign at the same time; this is an assertion which requires clarification and discussion. But that a certain state of taste always answers to a certain state of morals is indisputable.

all to the contrary, that this Play appeals to their turn of mind, which is to love and seek out new and singular ideas. Now there is nothing newer for them than what has to do with nature. It is precisely their aversion for the ordinary which sometimes leads them back to the simple things.

It follows from these first observations that the general effect of the Theater is to strengthen the national character, to augment the natural inclinations, and to give a new energy to all the passions. In this sense it would seem that, its effect being limited to intensifying and not changing the established morals, the Drama would be good for the good and bad for the vicious. Even in the first case it would remain to be seen if the passions did not degenerate into vices from being too much excited. I know that the Poetics of the Theater claims to do exactly the opposite and to purge the passions in exciting them. But I have difficulty understanding this rule. Is it possible that in order to become temperate and prudent we must begin by being intemperate and mad?

"Oh no! It is not that," say the partisans of the Theater. "Tragedy certainly intends that all the passions which it portrays move us; but it does not always want our emotion to be the same as that of the character tormented by a passion. More often, on the contrary, its purpose is to excite sentiments in us opposed to those it lends its characters." They say, moreover, that if Authors abuse their power of moving hearts to excite an inappropriate interest, this fault ought to be attributed to the ignorance and depravity of the Artists and not to the art. They say, finally, that the faithful depiction of the passions and of the sufferings which accompany them suffices in itself to make us avoid them with all the care of which we are capable.

To become aware of the bad faith of all these responses, one need only consult his own heart at the end of a tragedy. Do the emotion, the disturbance, and the softening which are felt within oneself and which continue after the play give indication of an immediate disposition to master and regulate our passions? Are the lively and touching impressions to which we become accustomed and which return so often, quite the means to moderate our sentiments in the case of need? Why should the image of the sufferings born of the passions efface that of the transports of pleasure and joy which are also seen to be born of them and which the Authors are careful to adorn even more in order to render their plays more enjoyable? Do we not know that all the passions are sisters and that one alone suffices for arousing a thousand, and that to combat one by the other is only the way to make the heart more sensitive to them all? The only instrument which serves to purge them is reason, and I have already said that reason has no effect in the theater. It is true that we do not share

the feelings of all the characters; for, since their interests are opposed, the Author must indeed make us prefer one of them; otherwise we would have no contact at all with the play. But far from choosing, for that reason, the passions which he wants to make us like, he is forced to choose those which we like already. What I have said of the sorts of Entertainment ought to be understood even more of the interest which is made dominant in them. At London a Drama is interesting when it causes the French to be hated; at Tunis, the noble passion would be piracy; at Messina, a delicious revenge; at Goa, the honor of burning Jews. If an Author* shocks these maxims, he will write a very fine play to which no one will go. And then this Author must be taxed with ignorance, with having failed in the first law of his art, in the one which serves as the basis for all the others, which is, to succeed. Thus the Theater purges the passions that one does not have and foments those that one does. Is that a well-administered remedy?

Hence, there is a combination of general and particular causes which keeps the Theater from being given that perfection of which it is thought to be susceptible and from producing the advantageous effects that seem to be expected from it. Even if this perfection is supposed to be as great as it can be, and the people as well disposed as could be wished, nevertheless these effects would be reduced to nothing for want of means to make them felt. I know of only three instruments with which the morals of a people can be acted upon: the force of the laws, the empire of opinion, and the appeal of pleasure. Now the laws have no access to the theater where the least constraint would make it a pain and not an amusement.** Opinion does not depend on the theater, since, rather than giving the law to the public, the theater receives the law from it. And, as to the pleasure that can be had in the theater, its whole effect is to bring us back more often.

Let us see if there can be other means. The theater, I am told, directed as it can and ought to be, makes virtue lovable and vice odious. What?

* In order to see this, let a man, righteous and virtuous, but simple and crude, with neither love nor gallantry and who speaks no fine phrases, be put on the French Stage; let a prudent man without prejudices be put on it, one who, having been affronted by a Bully, refuses to go and have his throat cut by the offender; and let the whole theatrical art be exhausted in rendering these characters as appealing to the French people as is the Cid: I will be wrong if it succeeds.

** The laws can determine the subjects of the plays, and their form, and the way to play them; but the laws cannot force the public to enjoy them. The Emperor Nero sang at the theater and had all those who fell asleep put to death; still he could not keep everybody awake. And the pleasure of a short nap came close to costing Vespasian his life.[17] Noble Actors of the Paris Opera, if you had enjoyed the imperial power, I should not now complain about having lived too long.

Before there were Dramas, were not virtuous men loved, were not the vicious hated, and are these sentiments feebler in the places that lack a Theater? The theater makes virtue lovable. . . . It accomplishes a great miracle in doing what nature and reason do before it! The vicious are hated on the stage. . . . Are they loved in Society when they are known to be such? Is it quite certain that this hate is the work of the Author rather than of the crimes that he makes the vicious commit? Is it quite certain that the simple account of these crimes would produce less horror in us than all the colors with which he has painted them? If his whole art consists in producing malefactors for us in order to render them hateful, I am unable to see what is so admirable in this art, and we get, in this regard, only too many lessons without need of this one. Dare I add a suspicion which comes to me? I suspect that any man, to whom the crimes of Phaedra or Medea were told beforehand, would hate them more at the beginning of the play than at the end. And if this suspicion is well founded, then what are we to think of this much-vaunted effect of the theater?

I should like to be clearly shown, without wasting words, how it could produce sentiments in us that we did not have and could cause us to judge moral beings otherwise than we judge them by ourselves? How puerile and senseless are these vain pretensions when examined closely! If the beauty of virtue were the product of art, virtue would have long since been disfigured! As for me, even if I am again to be regarded as wicked for daring to assert that man is born good, I think it and believe that I have proved it. The source of the concern which attaches us to what is decent and which inspires us with aversion for evil is in us and not in the plays. There is no art for producing this concern, but only for taking advantage of it. The love of the beautiful* is a sentiment as natural to the human heart as the love of self; it is not born out of an arrangement of scenes; the author does not bring it; he finds it there; and out of this pure sentiment, to which he appeals, are born the sweet tears that he causes to flow.

Imagine a Play as perfect as you like. Where is the man who, going for the first time, does not go already convinced of what is to be proved in it and already predisposed toward those whom he is meant to like? But this is not the question; what is important is to act consistently with one's principles and to imitate the people whom one esteems. The heart of man

* We have to do with the morally beautiful here. Whatever the Philosophers may say of it, this love is innate to man and serves as principle to his conscience. (I can cite as an example of this the little play *Nanine,* which has caused the audience to grumble and is only protected by the great reputation of its author.[18] All this is only because honor, virtue, and the pure sentiments of Nature are preferred in it to the impertinent prejudice of social station.)

is always right concerning that which has no personal relation to himself. In the quarrels at which we are purely Spectators, we immediately take the side of justice, and there is no act of viciousness which does not give us a lively sentiment of indignation so long as we receive no profit from it. But when our interest is involved, our sentiments are soon corrupted. And it is only then that we prefer the evil which is useful to us to the good that nature makes us love. Is it not a necessary effect of the constitution of things that the vicious man profits doubly, from his injustice and the probity of others? What more advantageous treaty could he conclude than one obliging the whole world, excepting himself, to be just, so that everyone will faithfully render unto him what is due him, while he renders to no one what he owes? He loves virtue, unquestionably; but he loves it in others because he hopes to profit from it. He wants none of it for himself because it would be costly to him. What then does he go to see at the Theater? Precisely what he wants to find everywhere: lessons of virtue for the public, from which he excepts himself, and people sacrificing everything to their duty while nothing is exacted from him.

I hear it said that tragedy leads to pity through fear. So it does; but what is this pity? A fleeting and vain emotion which lasts no longer than the illusion which produced it; a vestige of natural sentiment soon stifled by the passions; a sterile pity which feeds on a few tears and which has never produced the slightest act of humanity. Thus, the sanguinary Sulla cried at the account of evils he had not himself committed.[19] Thus, the tyrant of Phera hid himself at the Theater for fear of being seen groaning with Andromache and Priam, while he heard without emotion the cries of so many unfortunate victims slain daily by his orders.[20] Tacitus reports that Valerius Asiaticus, calumniously accused by the order of Messalina, who wanted him to perish, defended himself before the emperor in a way that touched this prince very deeply and drew tears from Messalina herself. She went into the next room in order to regain her composure after having, in the midst of her tears, whispered a warning to Vitellius not to let the accused escape. I never see one of these weeping ladies in the boxes at the theater, so proud of their tears, without thinking of the tears of Messalina for the poor Valerius Asiaticus.[21]

If, according to the observation of Diogenes Laertius, the heart is more readily touched by feigned ills than real ones, if theatrical imitations draw forth more tears than would the presence of the objects imitated, it is less because the emotions are feebler and do not reach the level of pain, as the Abbé du Bos believes,* than because they are pure and without

* He says that the Poet afflicts us only so much as we wish, that he makes us like his Heroes only so far as it pleases us.[22] This is contrary to all experience. Many people refrain

mixture of anxiety for ourselves. In giving our tears to these fictions, we have satisfied all the rights of humanity without having to give anything more of ourselves; whereas unfortunate people in person would require attention from us, relief, consolation, and work, which would involve us in their pains and would require at least the sacrifice of our indolence, from all of which we are quite content to be exempt. It could be said that our heart closes itself for fear of being touched at our expense.

In the final accounting, when a man has gone to admire fine actions in stories and to cry for imaginary miseries, what more can be asked of him? Is he not satisfied with himself? Does he not applaud his fine soul? Has he not acquitted himself of all that he owes to virtue by the homage which he has just rendered it? What more could one want of him? That he practice it himself? He has no role to play; he is no Actor.

The more I think about it, the more I find that everything that is played in the theater is not brought nearer to us but made more distant. When I see the *Comte d'Essex,*[23] the reign of Elizabeth is ten Centuries removed in my eyes, and, if an event that took place yesterday at Paris were played, I should be made to suppose it in the time of Molière. The theater has rules, principles, and a morality apart, just as it has a language and a style of dress that is its own. We say to ourselves that none of this is suitable for us, and that we should think ourselves as ridiculous to adopt the virtues of its Heroes as it would be to speak in verse or to put on Roman clothing. This is pretty nearly the use of all these great sentiments and of all these brilliant maxims that are vaunted with so much emphasis—to relate them forever to the Stage, and to present virtue to us as a theatrical game, good for amusing the public but which it would be folly seriously to attempt introducing into Society. Thus the most advantageous impression of the best tragedies is to reduce all the duties of man to some passing and sterile emotions that have no consequences, to make us applaud our courage in praising that of others, our humanity in pitying the ills that we could have cured, our charity in saying to the poor, God will help you!

To be sure, a simpler style can be adopted on the Stage, and the tone of the theater can be reconciled in the Drama with that of the world. But in this way, morals are not corrected; they are depicted, and an ugly face does not appear ugly to him who wears it. If we wish to correct them by caricaturing them, we leave the realm of probability and nature, and the picture no longer produces an effect. Caricature does not render objects

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from going to tragedy because they are moved to the point of discomfort; others, ashamed of crying at the theater, do so nevertheless in spite of themselves; and these effects are not rare enough to be only exceptions to the maxim of this Author.

hateful; it only renders them ridiculous. And out of this arises a very great difficulty; afraid of being ridiculous, men are no longer afraid of being vicious. The former cannot be remedied without promoting the latter. Why, you will ask, must I suppose this to be a necessary opposition? Why, Sir? Because the good do not make evil men objects of derision, but crush them with their contempt, and nothing is less funny or laughable than virtue's indignation. Ridicule, on the other hand, is the favorite arm of vice. With it, the respect that the heart owes to virtue is attacked at its root, and the love that is felt for it is finally extinguished.

Thus everything compels us to abandon this vain idea that some wish to give us of the perfection of a form of Theater directed toward public utility. It is an error, said the grave Muralt,[24] to hope that the true relations of things will be faithfully presented in the theater. For, in general, the Poet can only alter these relations in order to accommodate them to the taste of the public. In the comic, he diminishes them and sets them beneath man; in the tragic, he extends them to render them heroic and sets them above humanity. Thus they are never to his measure, and we always see Beings other than our own kind in the theater. I add that this difference is so true and so well recognized that Aristotle makes a rule of it in his poetics: *Comoedia enim deteriores, Tragoedia meliores quam nunc sont imitari conantur.*[25] Here is a well-conceived imitation, which proposes for its object that which does not exist at all and leaves, between defect and excess, that which is as a useless thing! But of what importance is the truth of the imitation, provided the illusion is there? The only object is to excite the curiosity of the public. These productions of wit and craft, like most others, have for their end only applause. When the Author receives it and the Actors share in it, the play has reached its goal, and no other advantage is sought. Now, if the benefit is nonexistent, the harm remains; and since the latter is indisputable, the issue seems to me to be settled. But let us turn to some examples which will make the solution clearer.

I believe I can assert as a truth easy to prove, on the basis of those mentioned above, that the French theater, with all of its faults, is nevertheless pretty nearly as perfect as it can be, whether from the point of view of pleasure or that of utility, and that these two advantages are in a relation that cannot be disturbed without taking from one more than would be given the other, which would make the theater even less perfect. This is not to say that a man of genius could not invent a kind of play preferable to those which are established. But this new kind, needing the talents of the Author to sustain itself, will necessarily die with him. And his successors, lacking the same resources, will always be forced to return to the common means of interesting and of pleasing. What are

these means in our theater? Celebrated actions, great names, great virtues, in tragedy; comic situations and the amusing in Comedy; and always love in both.* I ask in what way morals can profit from all this?

I will be told that in these plays crime is always punished and virtue always rewarded. I answer that, even if this were so, most tragic actions are only pure fables, events known to be inventions of the Poet, and so do not make a strong impression on the Audience; as a result of showing them that we want to instruct them, we no longer instruct them. I answer, moreover, that these punishments and rewards are always effected by such extraordinary means that nothing similar is expected in the natural course of human things. Finally, I answer by denying the fact. It is not, nor can it be, generally true. For, since this end is not the one toward which authors direct their plays, they are likely to attain it rarely; and often it would be an obstacle to success. Vice or virtue?—what is the difference, provided that the public is overawed by an impression of greatness? So the French Stage, undeniably the most perfect, or at least, the most correct which has ever existed, is no less the triumph of the great villains than of the most illustrious heroes: witness Catalina, Mahomet, Atreus[26] and many others.

I am well aware that one must not look to the catastrophe to judge the moral effect of a tragedy and that, in this respect, the end is fulfilled when the virtuous unfortunate is the object of more concern than the happy guilty party! This does not prevent the pretended rule from being violated in such a case. As there is no one who would not prefer to be Britannicus than Nero, I agree that we ought to consider the play which puts them on the stage to be a good one in this respect, even though Britannicus perishes in it. But, according to the same principle, what judgment must we bring to a tragedy in which, although the criminals are punished, they are presented to us in so favorable a light that our sympathies are entirely with them? Where Cato, the greatest of humans, plays the role of a Pedant; where Cicero, the savior of the Republic—Cicero, who of all those who have borne the name of Fathers of their Fatherland was the first to have it and the only one to merit it—is shown as a vile orator, a coward; while the infamous Catalina, covered with crimes that we would not dare to mention, ready to slay all his magistrates and to reduce his fatherland to ashes has the role of a great man and gains by his talents, his firmness, and his courage all the esteem of the Audience? For all that he may have had a strong soul, if you please, was he any the less for that a

* The Greeks did not need to found the principal interest of their tragedy on love and actually did not do so. Our tragedy does not have the same resources and could not do without this interest. The reason for this difference will be seen in what follows.

hateful villain? And was it necessary to lend to the crimes of a brigand the coloring of a Hero's exploits? To what else does the moral of such a play lead if not to the encouragement of Catalinas and to the bestowing on clever knaves of the benefits of the public esteem owed to the virtuous? But such is the taste that must be flattered on the Stage; such are the morals of an educated age. Knowledge, wit, and courage alone have our admiration. And thou, sweet and modest virtue, thou remain'st ever unhonored! Blind men that we are, amidst so much enlightenment! Victims of our own mad applause, will we never learn how much contempt and hate are deserved by any man who abuses the genius and the talent that nature gave him, to the hurt of humankind?

Atrée and *Mahomet* do not even use the feeble device of a final catastrophe. The monster who serves as Hero in each of these two plays comfortably finishes his crimes and enjoys their benefits; one of the two states the matter in fitting terms, in the last verse of the tragedy:

Finally I harvest the fruits of my crimes.[27]

I am prepared to believe that the Audience, sent home with this fine maxim, will not conclude that crime pays in pleasure and enjoyment. But I ask, what will the play in which this maxim is set up as an example have profited them?

As for *Mahomet,* the fault of attaching the public admiration to the guilty party, who is really worthy of exactly the opposite, would be even greater if the Author had not taken care to bring attention and veneration to a second character in such a way as to remove, or at least to balance, the terror and amazement which Mahomet inspires. Above all, the scene they have together is conducted with so much art that Mahomet, without being out of character, without losing any of the superiority belonging to him, is nevertheless eclipsed by the simple common sense and intrepid virtue of Zopire.* To dare to put two such interlocutors face to face, an Author was needed who was well aware of his powers. I have never heard spoken

*I remember having found more warmth and elevation in Omar in his relations with Zopire than in Mahomet himself; and I took this for a fault. In thinking it over, I changed my mind. Omar, carried away by his fanaticism, ought to speak of his Master only with that transport of zeal and admiration which raises him above humanity. But Mahomet is not a fanatic; he is an impostor who, knowing that there is no question of playing the inspired prophet with Zopire, seeks to win him with an affected tone of confidence and through ambitious motives. This reasonable posture renders him necessarily less brilliant than Omar; he is so by the very fact that he is greater and is better able to judge men. He himself says this or makes it understood throughout the scene. It was hence my fault if I did not recognize this; but that is what happens to us little Authors. In wishing to censure the Writings of our Masters, our thoughtlessness cause us to pick out a thousand faults which are beauties for men of judgment.

all the praise of which this scene, in particular, seems to me to be worthy; but I do not know another in the French theater where the hand of a master is more visibly imprinted, and where the sacred character of virtue more visibly triumphs over the elevation of genius.

Another consideration which tends to justify this play is that its purpose is not only to expose crimes but, in particular, the crimes of fanaticism, for the sake of teaching the people to understand it and to defend themselves against it. Unhappily, such efforts are quite useless and are not always without danger. Fanaticism is not an error, but a blind and stupid fury that reason can never confine. The only secret for preventing it from coming to birth is to restrain those who excite it. You can very well demonstrate to madmen that their chiefs are fooling them; they are no less fervent in following them. Once fanaticism exists, I see only one way left to stop its progress; that is to use its own arms against it. It has nothing to do with reasoning or convincing. One must leave philosophy behind, close the Books, take the sword, and punish the impostors. What is more, I fear, with regard to Mahomet, that his greatness of soul diminishes the atrocity of his crimes by a great deal in the eyes of the Spectators, and that such a play, given before people capable of choosing, would create more Mahomets than Zopires. At least, it is quite certain that such examples are not at all encouraging for virtue.

The black Atreus has none of these excuses; the horror which he inspires is a pure loss. He teaches us nothing other than to shudder at his crime; and, although he is great only in his rage, there is no other figure in the whole play who is capable, by his character, of sharing the public's attention with him. For, as to the mawkish Plisthenes, I do not know how he can be endured in such a tragedy. Seneca put no love in his; and since the modern Author was able to bring himself to follow Seneca in all the rest, he would have done well to have imitated him in this too. Indeed, one must have a very flexible heart to tolerate amorous conversations along with Atreus' scenes.

Before finishing with this play, I cannot refrain from mentioning a merit in it which will, perhaps, seem to be a fault to many people. The role of Thyestes is, perhaps of all that have ever been put on our stage, the one that most approaches the taste of the ancients. He is not a courageous Hero; he is not a model of virtue; it could not be said, either, that he is a criminal.* He is a weak man and nevertheless involves our sympathy on this basis alone; he is a man and unfortunate. It seems, also, on

* The proof of this is that he attracts us. As to the fault for which he is punished, it is old, it is quite enough atoned for, and finally, it is a small thing for a villain in the theater; a villain in the theater is not understood to be such if he does not cause us to shudder in horror.

this basis alone, that the feeling which he inspires is extremely tender and moving. For this man is very close to each of us; heroism, on the other hand, overwhelms us even more than it moves us, because, after all, what has it to do with us? Would it not be desirable if our sublime Authors deigned to descend a little from their customary great heights and touched us sometimes with simple suffering humanity, for fear that having pity only for unhappy Heroes we shall pity no one? The ancients had Heroes and put men on their stages; we, on the contrary, put only Heroes on the stage and hardly have any men. The ancients spoke of humanity in less-studied phrases, but they knew how to exercise it better. A story that Plutarch tells fits them and us, and I cannot refrain from transcribing it. An Old Athenian was looking for a seat at the theater and could not find one. Some youngsters, seeing him in difficulty, waved to him from afar. He came, but they pushed close together and made fun of him. The good man made his way around the theater in this fashion, not knowing what to do with himself and constantly jeered by the fair youth. The Ambassadors of Sparta noticed it and, standing up immediately, gave the Old Man an honorable place in their midst. This action was observed by the whole audience and universally applauded. "Woe is me," cried out the Old Man in a pained tone, "the Athenians know what is decent, but the Lacedaemonians practice it."[28] Here are modern philosophy and ancient morals.

I return to my subject. What do we learn from *Phèdre* and *Œdipe* other than that man is not free and that Heaven punishes him for crimes that it makes him commit? What do we learn in *Médée* other than how cruel and unnatural a mother can be made by the rage of jealousy? Look at most of the plays in the French theater; in practically all of them you will find abominable monsters and atrocious actions, useful, if you please, in making the plays interesting and in giving exercise to the virtues; but they are certainly dangerous in that they accustom the eyes of the People to horrors that they ought not even to know and to crimes they ought not to suppose possible. It is not even true that murder and parricide are always hateful in the theater. With the help of some easy suppositions, they are rendered permissible or pardonable. It is hard not to excuse Phaedra, who is incestuous and spills innocent blood. Syphax poisoning his wife, the young Horatius stabbing his sister, Agamemnon sacrificing his daughter, Orestes cutting his mother's throat, do not fail to be figures who arouse sympathy. Add that the Author, in order to make each speak according to his character, is forced to put into the mouths of villains their maxims and principles clad in the magnificence of beautiful verse and recited in an imposing and sententious tone for the instruction of the Audience.[29]

If the Greeks tolerated such theater it was because it represented for them national traditions which were always common among the people, which they had reasons to recall constantly; and even its hateful aspects were part of its intention. Deprived of the same motives and the same concern, how can the same tragedy find, in your country, spectators capable of enduring the depictions it presents to them and the characters which are given life in it? One kills his Father, marries his Mother, and finds himself the brother of his children; another forces a son to slay his Father; a third makes a Father drink the blood of his son. We shudder at the very idea of the horrors with which the French Stage is decked out for the amusement of the gentlest and the most humane people on earth! No . . . I maintain, and I bring in witness the terror of my Readers, that the massacres of the Gladiators were not so barbarous as these frightful plays. At the circus one saw blood flowing, it is true; but one did not soil his imagination with crimes at which nature trembles.

Happily, the tragedy such as it exists is so far from us, it presents Beings so enormous, so bloated, so chimerical, that the example of their vices is hardly more contagious than that of their virtues is useful; and, to the extent it wants to instruct us less, it does us also less harm. But it is not so with comedy, the morals of which have a more immediate relationship with ours, and whose characters resemble men more. It is all bad and pernicious; every aspect strikes home with the Audience. And since the very pleasure of the comic is founded on a vice of the human heart, it is a consequence of this principle that the more the comedy is amusing and perfect, the more its effect is disastrous for morals. But, without repeating what I have already said of its nature, I shall limit myself here to applying it and shall take a look at your comic theater.

Take it in its perfection, that is to say, at its birth. It is agreed, and it is more clearly grasped every day, that Molière is the most perfect comic author whose works are known to us. But who can deny also that the theater of this same Molière, of whose talents I am a greater admirer than anyone, is a school of vices and bad morals even more dangerous than the very Books which profess to teach them? His greatest care is to ridicule goodness and simplicity and to present treachery and falsehood so that they arouse our interest and sympathy. His decent people only talk; his vicious characters act, and the most brilliant successes accompany them most of the time. Finally, the honor of applause is reserved rarely for those who are the most respectable, and goes almost always to the cleverest.

Consider what is comic in this Author. Everywhere you will find that the vices of character are its instrument, and the natural failings its subject; that the malice of the former punishes the simplicity of the latter;

and that fools are the victims of the vicious. Because this is only too true in the world does not mean that it should be put on the stage with an air of approval, as if to excite perfidious souls to punish, under the name of folly, the candor of decent men:

Dat veniam corvis, vexat censura columbas.[30]

This is the general spirit of Molière and his imitators. They are men who, at the most, sometimes make fun of the vices without ever making virtue loved—men who, as one of the ancients said, know how to snuff out the lamp but who never put any oil in it.

See how this man, for the sake of multiplying his jokes, shakes the whole order of society; how scandalously he overturns all the most sacred relations on which it is founded; how ridiculous he makes the respectable rights of fathers over their children, of husbands over their wives, of masters over their servants! He makes us laugh, it is true, and for that he is all the more guilty, in forcing, by an invincible charm, even the wise to lend themselves to jests which ought to call forth their indignation. I hear it said that he attacks the vices; but I should like those that he attacks to be compared with those he encourages. Who is more blameworthy, the unintelligent man of the Middle Class who foolishly plays the Gentleman, or the rascally Gentleman who dupes him? In the play of which I speak,[31] is it not the latter who is the decent man? Is not the sympathy on his side, and does not the public applaud him at every trick he plays on the other? Who is the more criminal, a peasant so mad as to marry a Lady, or a wife who seeks to dishonor her husband? What is to be thought of a play at which the audience applauds the infidelity, the lying, and impudence of the latter and laughs at the stupidity of the dolt punished?[32] It is a great vice to be miserly and to loan usuriously; but is it not even a greater one for a son to rob his Father, to lack respect for him, to make him a thousand insulting reproaches and, when the father, vexed, gives the son his malediction, to answer with a sneer that he does not know what to do with his father's gifts? If the joke is excellent, is it any the less punishable? And is the play which makes the insolent son who did this liked any the less a school of bad morals?[33]

I shall not stop to speak of Valets. They are condemned by everyone;* and it would be all the more unjust to impute to Molière the errors of

*I do not decide if one actually ought to condemn them. It is possible that Valets are only the instruments of their master's viciousness, since the masters have taken the honor of invention away from them. However, I suspect that the somewhat too naive image of Society is good for the theater in this case. Supposing that some knavery is necessary in plays, I do not know if it is not better that the Valets be responsible for it and that the decent folk be left as decent folk: at least on the Stage.

his models and of his Age, since he emancipated himself from them. We shall not take advantage of the ineptitudes which might be found in the works of his youth or of what is less good in his other plays, but will go directly to what is universally recognized to be his masterpiece; I mean the *Misanthrope.*

I find that this comedy reveals better than any other the true aims for which Molière composed his theater, and through it we can better judge its real effects. Since he had to please the public, he consulted the most general taste of those who constitute it; according to this taste he formed a model, and according to this model he drew a picture of the contrary failings from which he took his comic characteristics, various features of which he distributed in his plays. He did not, then, pretend to form a decent man but a man of the world. Consequently, he did not wish to correct the vices, but what is ridiculous. And, as I have already said, he found in vice itself a fitting instrument to accomplish this. Thus, wishing to expose to public derision all the failings opposed to the qualities of the likable man—the man of Society—after he had played so many other ridiculous characters, there remained to him that one which the world pardons the least, the one who is ridiculous because he is virtuous. This is what he did in the *Misanthrope.*

You could not deny me two things: one, that Alceste in this play is a righteous man, sincere, worthy, truly a good man; and, second, that the author makes him a ridiculous figure. This is already enough, it seems to me, to render Molière inexcusable. It could be said that he played in Alceste not virtue but a true failing—the hatred of men. To that I answer that it is not true that he gave this hatred to his character. This name, Misanthrope, must not give the false impression that the one who bears it is the enemy of humankind. Such a hatred would not be a failing but a perversion of nature, and the greatest of all vices. Since all the social virtues relate back to beneficence, nothing is so directly contrary to them as inhumanity.[34] The true Misanthrope is a monster. If he could exist, he would not cause laughter but horror. You may have seen in the Italian theater a play entitled *la Vie est un songe.*[35] If you recall the hero, there you have the real Misanthrope.

Who, then, is the Misanthrope of Molière? A good man who detests the morals of his Age and the viciousness of his contemporaries; who, precisely because he loves his fellow creatures, hates in them the evils they do to one another and the vices of which these evils are the product. If he were less touched by the errors of humanity, if he suffered less from indignation at the iniquities he sees, would he be more humane himself? It would be as well to assert that a tender Father loves another's children

more than his own because he is angered by the faults of his own and never says anything to the children of others.

These sentiments of the Misanthrope are perfectly developed in his role. He says, I admit, that he has conceived a terrible hatred of humankind. But on what occasion does he say it?* When, outraged at having seen his friend betray his sentiments like a coward and deceive the man who asked him for them, he sees that at the peak of his anger he is being made fun of to boot. It is natural that this anger should degenerate into fury and make him then say what he would not think when composed. Besides, the reason he gives for this universal hate fully justifies his cause:

> *Some because they are vicious,*
> *The others for being obliging to the vicious.*

Hence, it is not of men that he is the enemy, but of the viciousness of some and of the support this viciousness finds in the others. If there were neither knaves nor flatterers, he would love all humankind. There is no good man who is not a misanthrope in this sense; or, rather, the real misanthropes are those who do not think as he does. For, in the final accounting, I know of no greater enemy of man than everybody's friend who, always charmed by everything, constantly encourages the vicious, and who, by his culpable complacency, flatters the vices out of which are born all the disorders of Society.

A certain proof that Alceste is not literally a Misanthrope is that, even with his bluntness and insults, he does not fail to arouse sympathy or to please. The Audience would certainly not want to be like him, because so much righteousness is very uncomfortable; but not one of them would find it disagreeable to have to do with someone who resembled him; this could not happen if he were the declared enemy of men. In all the other plays of Molière, the ridiculous character is always detestable or contemptible. In this one, although Alceste has real failings at which it would not be wrong to laugh, one cannot help feeling respect for him deep in one's heart. On this occasion the force of virtue wins out over the art of the Author and does honor to his character. Although Molière wrote reprehensible plays, he was personally a decent man; and the brush of a decent man has never been able to paint the features of righteousness and probity with odious colors. What is more, Molière put into Alceste's

* I warn my readers that, since I am without books, without memory, and without any materials other than a confused reminiscence of the observations that I have made in the Theater in the past, I may cite erroneously and confuse the order of the plays. But if my examples are not very adequate, my reasons will nonetheless be so inasmuch as they are not drawn from one play or the other but from the general spirit of the theater, which I have studied well.

mouth so great a number of his own maxims that many have thought that he wanted to depict himself. This appeared in the resentment felt in the audience at the first performance when they found they did not share the misanthrope's opinion about the Sonnet;[36] for it was evident that it was the author's own.

Nevertheless, this virtuous character is presented as ridiculous. It is indeed ridiculous in certain respects, and what demonstrates that the Poet's intention is really to make it so is Philinte's character, which he sets in opposition to the other. This Philinte is the Wise Man of the play: one of those decent members of high society whose maxims resemble so much those of knaves, one of those gentle, moderate people who always find that everything is fine because it is to their interest that nothing be better, who are always satisfied with everyone because they do not care about anyone; who, at a good dinner, assert that it is not true that the people are hungry; who, with a well-lined pocket, find it quite disagreeable that some declaim in favor of the poor; who, their own doors well secured, would see the whole of humankind robbed, plundered, slain, and massacred without complaining, given that God has endowed them with a most meritorious gentleness with which they are able to support the misfortunes of others.

It is clear that the reasoning apathy of this figure is quite suitable for intensifying and setting off in a comic fashion the furies of the other. And the fault of Molière is not that he made the misanthrope an irritable and bilious man, but that he gave him childish rages about subjects that ought not to have touched him. The character of the Misanthrope is not at the Poet's disposal; it is determined by the nature of his dominant passion. This passion is a violent hatred of vice, born from an ardent love of virtue and soured by the continual spectacle of men's viciousness. It is, then, only a great and noble soul which is susceptible to it. The horror and contempt which this same passion nourishes for all the vices which have vexed it, serves also to keep these vices from the heart it agitates. Further, this continual contemplation of the disorders of Society detaches him from himself and fixes all his attention on humankind. This habit raises and enlarges his ideas and destroys in him the base inclinations which nourish and strengthen amour-propre, and out of this conjuncture of effects is born a certain courageous force, a pride of character which leaves room in his soul only for sentiments worthy of occupying it.

This is not to say that man is not ever man, that passion does not often render him weak, unjust, and unreasonable; that he does not perhaps spy out the hidden motives of others' actions with a secret pleasure at finding the corruption of their hearts; that a small wrong does not often make

him very wrathful; and that in irritating him purposefully a clever villain cannot succeed in making him appear to be a villain himself. But it is nonetheless true that not all means are good for producing these effects, and that they must be fitted to the misanthrope's character in order to put it into motion; otherwise, one substitutes another man for the misanthrope and paints him with other features than his own.

This, then, is the way in which the Misanthrope's character ought to show its failings, and this is also what Molière makes use of admirably in all of Alceste's Scenes with his friend, where the cold maxims and the jests of the latter constantly deflate him and make him say countless well-timed absurdities. But this hard and unbending character, which at moments gives him so much gall and sourness, removes him at the same time from every puerile chagrin that has no reasonable basis and from every intense personal interest to which he ought not to be susceptible. Let him be enraged at every disorder at which he is only a witness, for this is only one more detail in the picture; but make him cold in what directly concerns himself. For, having declared war on the vicious, he must expect that they in turn will declare it on him. If he had not foreseen the harm that his frankness would do him, it would be a folly and not a virtue. If a false woman betray him, unworthy friends dishonor him, or weak friends abandon him, he must suffer it without a murmur. He knows men.

If these distinctions are correct, Molière has misunderstood the Misanthrope. Can it be thought that he did it unawares? Certainly not. This is how the desire to cause laughter at the expense of the character forced him to degrade it contrary to its truth.

After the adventure of the sonnet, how could Alceste not expect the bad turns of Oronte? Could he be astonished when he learns of them, as if it were the first time in his life that he had been sincere, or the first time that his sincerity had made an enemy? Ought he not, rather, prepare himself quietly for the loss of his case than give evidence of a childish spite beforehand?

> *This can well cost me twenty thousand francs;*
> *But for twenty thousand francs I shall have the right to storm.*

A misanthrope need not buy the right to storm so dearly; he has only to open his eyes; he does not care for money enough to believe that, because he has lost a trial, he has acquired a new right on this point. But one had to make the Audience laugh.

In the scene with Du Bois, the more Alceste has cause to become impatient, the more he ought to remain phlegmatic and cold, because the

silliness of the Valet is not a vice. The Misanthrope and the man in a fury are two very different characters. This was an occasion upon which to distinguish them. Molière was not unaware of it; but he had to make the audience laugh.

At the risk of making the reader laugh too, at my expense, I dare to accuse this author of having missed an opportunity for greater harmony, for greater truthfulness, and perhaps for new beauties of situation. He could have made a change in his plan so that Philinte entered as a necessary actor into the plot of the play, putting his actions and those of Alceste in apparent opposition with their principles and in perfect conformity with their characters. I mean that the Misanthrope should have always been furious against public vices and always tranquil about the personal viciousness of which he was the victim. On the other hand, the philosopher Philinte ought to have seen all the disorders of society with a stoical phlegm and set himself in a fury at the slightest harm directed personally to himself. Actually, I notice that these people who are so easy-going about public injustices are always those who make the most noise at the least injury done them, and that they stand by their philosophy only so long as they have no need of it for themselves. They resemble that Irishman who did not want to get out of bed although the house was on fire. "The house is burning," they yelled to him. "What difference does it make to me?" he answered, "I am only renting it." Finally, the fire reached him. Immediately, he bounded out, ran, screamed, and became disturbed. He began to understand that sometimes we must take an interest in the house in which we live even though it does not belong to us.

It seems to me that, in treating the characters in question along these lines, each of them would have been truer, more theatrical, and that Alceste would have been incomparably more effective. but then the audience could only have laughed at the expense of the man of the world, and the author's intention was that they laugh at the expense of the Misanthrope.*

With the same intent, he sometimes gives Alceste lines expressing a bad temper entirely contrary to the taste with which he endowed him. Such is the pun from the sonnet scene:

A plague on thy Fall, Devil's poisoner!
May thou have a fall to break thy nose.

* I do not doubt that, on the basis of the idea that I have just proposed, a man of genius could compose a new *Misanthrope,* not less true nor less natural than the Athenian one, equal in merit to that of Molière and incomparably more instructive. I see only one difficulty for this new play, which is that it could not succeed. For, whatever one may say, in things that dishonor, no one laughs with good grace at his own expense. Here we are caught up again in my principles.

This is a pun so much the more out of place in the Misanthrope's mouth, since he has just criticized more bearable ones in Orante's sonnet. And it is very curious that, a moment later, he who composes it proposes the *Chanson du roi Henri* as a model of taste. It is useless to maintain that this line escapes in a moment of spite; for spite can dictate nothing less than puns, and Alceste, who spends his life scolding, ought, even in scolding, to have taken a tone more appropriate to his turn of mind:

Good lord! Vile flatterer! You praise follies.

This is the way the Misanthrope ought to speak in anger. Never will a pun go well after that. But one had to make the audience laugh; and it is thus that one abases virtue.

A rather notable aspect of this comedy is that the foreign features which the author gave to the Misanthrope's role forced him to dilute what was essential to the character. Thus, while in all his other plays the characters are heightened to made the greatest effect, in this one the traits are blunted to render it more theatrical. The same scene about which I have just spoken provides me with the proof. In it, Alceste is seen to be evasive and roundabout in giving his opinion to Oronte. This is not at all the Misanthrope. It is a decent man of the world who takes great pains to fool the man who consults him. The force of the character insists that he say bluntly, "Your Sonnet is worthless; throw it in the fire." But that would have taken away the humor born of the Misanthrope's perplexity and of his repetitions of "I don't say that," which, nevertheless, are really only falsehoods. If Philinte, following his example, had said at this pint, "And what do you say now, deceiver?" what could Alceste answer? In truth, it is not worth continuing to be a misanthrope when he is one only halfway. For if one permits oneself the first circumspection and the first alteration of the truth, where is the sufficient reason for stopping before one becomes as false as a courtier?

Alceste's friend ought to know him. How can he dare propose to him that they go to see the judges, that is to say, in honest terms, that they seek to corrupt them? How can he suppose that a man capable of renouncing even propriety for the love of virtue could be capable of neglecting his duties for private interest? Solicit a Judge; one need not be a misanthrope —it suffices to be a decent man—to have no part of it. For, whatever face one puts on the thing, either the one who solicits a Judge exhorts him to do his duty and hence insults him; or he proposes that he take persons into consideration and hence wants to seduce him, since any consideration of persons is a crime for a Judge, who ought to consider the suit and not its parties and ought to look only to order and the laws. Now, I say

that to engage a judge to do a bad action is to do one oneself, and that it is better to lose a just cause than to do a bad action. That is clear and evident; there is nothing to answer to it. Worldly morality has different maxims; I am not unaware of that. It is enough for me that I show that in everything which made the misanthrope so ridiculous he was only doing the duty of a good man, and that his character was badly developed from the beginning if his friend supposed that he could fail in his duty.

If this skillful author sometimes lets this character act with all its force, it is only when this force renders the scene more theatrical and produces a more perceptible comedy of contrasts or situation. Such is, for example, the taciturn and silent temper of Alceste, and then the intrepid and vigorously punctuated censure in the conversation at the Coquette's.

All right, steady, thrust, my good friends of the court.

Here the author has strongly accentuated the distinction between the slanderer and the misanthrope. The latter, with his sharp and biting spleen, abhors calumny and detests satire. It is public vices and the vicious in general that he attacks. Low and secret slander is unworthy of him; he despises it and hates it in others. And, when he has something bad to say of someone, he begins by saying it to his face. Thus nowhere else in the entire play is he as effective as in this scene, because it is here that he is what he ought to be; and if he makes the audience laugh, decent men do not blush for having laughed.

But, in general, it cannot be denied that if the misanthrope were more of a misanthrope he would be a great deal less funny; for his frankness and firmness, never permitting him to be roundabout, would never leave him at a loss. It is not then out of consideration for him that the author sometimes dilutes his character: it is, on the contrary, to make him more ridiculous. Yet another reason forces Molière to it; the misanthrope in the theater, having to speak about what he sees, must live in society and, consequently, must temper his righteousness and his ways by some of those lying and false considerations of which politeness consists and which society exacts from whomever wants to be tolerated in it. If he acted otherwise, his words would have no effect at all. It is the author's interest to make him ridiculous but not mad; and that is how he would appear to the eyes of the public if he were entirely wise.

It is difficult to leave this admirable Play when one has begun to treat it; and the more one thinks about it, the more one finds new beauties in it. But, finally, since it is, of all Molière's comedies, indisputably the one which contains the best and healthiest moral, from it we can judge the others. And let us agree that, since the intention of the author is to please

corrupt minds, either his morality leads to evil, or the false good that he preaches is more dangerous than the evil itself; in that it seduces by an appearance of reason; in that it causes the practice and the principles of society to be preferred to exact probity; in that it makes wisdom consist in a certain mean between vice and virtue; in that, to the great relief of the audience, it persuades them that to be a decent man it suffices not to be a complete villain.

I would be at too great an advantage if I wanted to turn, after the consideration of Molière, to that of his successors, who, without his genius and probity, followed, all the better for that, his interested views in dedicating themselves to flattering debauched young men and women without morals.[37] I will not do Dancourt the honor of speaking of him. His plays do not shock with obscene words, but, to tolerate them, only one's ears can be chaste. Regnard, more modest, is no less dangerous; leaving the other to amuse fallen women, he undertakes the formation of cheats. It is unbelievable that, with the accord of the police,[38] a comedy is publicly played right in Paris in which a nephew, the decent man of the play, along with his worthy attendants, in the apartment of his uncle whom he has just witnessed dying, busies himself with activities which the law punishes with the rope; and that, instead of shedding the tears which simple humanity elicits from even the indifferent under such circumstances, they vie with one another to lighten the sad rites of death with barbarous jokes. The most sacred rights, the most touching sentiments of nature, are played upon in this dreadful scene. The most criminal acts are wantonly gathered together here with a playfulness which makes all this pass for nicety. Counterfeiting, forgery, theft, imposture, lying, cruelty; everything is there, everything is applauded. When the dead man takes it into his head to rise again, to the great displeasure of his dear nephew, and is not willing to ratify what has been done in his name, the means are found to extract his consent by force, and everything comes out to the satisfaction of the Actors and the Spectators. In spite of themselves, the latter have identified with these wretches and leave the play with the edifying reminiscence of having been, in the depths of their hearts, accomplices of the crimes they have seen committed.[39]

Let us dare to say it without being roundabout. Which of us is sure enough of himself to bear the performance of such a comedy without halfway taking part in the deeds which are played in it? Who would not be a bit distressed if the thief were to be taken by surprise or fail in his attempt? Who does not himself become a thief for a minute in being concerned about him? For is being concerned about someone anything other than putting oneself in his place? A fine instruction for the youth, one in

which grown men have difficulty protecting themselves from the seductions of vice! Is that to say that it is never permissible to show blamable actions in the theater? No; but, in truth, to know how to put a rascal on the Stage, a very decent man must be the author.

These failings are so inherent to our theater that, in wanting to remove them, it is disfigured. Our contemporary authors, guided by the best of intentions, write more refined plays. But what happens then? They are no longer really comic and produce no effect. They are very instructive, if you please; but they are even more boring. One might as well go to a sermon.

In this decadence of the theater, we are constrained to substitute for the true beauties, now eclipsed, little pleasurable accessories capable of impressing the multitude. No longer able to maintain the strength of comic situations and character, the love interest has been reinforced. The same has been done in tragedy to take the place of situations drawn from Political concerns we no longer have, and of simple and natural sentiments which no longer move anyone. The authors, in the public interest, contest with one another to give a new energy and a new coloring to this dangerous passion; and, since Molière and Corneille, only Romances, under the name of dramatic plays, succeed in the theater.

Love is the realm of women. It is they who necessarily give the law in it, because, according to the order of nature, resistance belongs to them, and men can conquer this resistance only at the expense of their liberty. Hence, a natural effect of this sort of play is to extend the empire of the Fair Sex, to make women and girls the preceptors of the public, and to give them the same power over the audience that they have over their lovers. Do you think, Sir, that this order is without its difficulties; and that, in taking so much effort to increase the ascendancy of women, men will be the better governed for it?

It is possible that there are in the world a few women worthy of being listened to by a decent man; but, in general, is it from women that he ought to take counsel, and is there no way of honoring their sex without abasing our own? Nature's most charming object, the one most able to touch a sensitive heart and to lead it to the good, is, I admit, an agreeable and virtuous woman. But where is this celestial object hiding itself? Is it not cruel to contemplate it with so much pleasure in the theater, only to find such a different sort in society? Nevertheless, the seductive picture makes its effect. The enchantment produced by these prodigies of prudence is turned to the profit of women without honor. If a young man has seen the world only on the Stage, the first way to approach virtue which presents itself to him is to look for a mistress who will lead him

there, hoping of course to find a Constance or a Cénie,* at the very least.[40] It is thus, on the faith in an imaginary model, on a modest and moving manner, on a counterfeited sweetness, *nescius aurae fallacis,*[41] that the young fool goes to his destruction thinking he is becoming wise.

This gives me the occasion to pose a sort of problem. The ancients had, in general, a very great respect for women;** but they showed this respect by refraining from exposing them to public judgment, and thought to honor their modesty by keeping quiet about their other virtues. They had as their maxim that the land where morals were purest was the one where they spoke the least of women, and that the most decent woman was the one about whom the least was said. It is on this principle that a Spartan, hearing a foreigner singing the praises of a Lady of his acquaintance, interrupted him in anger: "Won't you stop," he said to him, "slandering a virtuous woman?"[43] From this also came the fact that in their Drama the only roles representing women in love and marriageable girls were of slaves or prostitutes. They had such an idea of the modesty of the Fair Sex that they would have thought they failed in the respect owed to it, if they even represented decent girls on the stage.*** In a word, the image of open vice shocked them less than that of offended modesty.

With us, on the contrary, the most esteemed woman is the one who has the greatest renown, about whom the most is said, who is the most often seen in society, at whose home one dines the most, who most imperiously sets the tone, who judges, resolves, decides, pronounces, assigns talents, merit, and virtues their degrees and places, and whose favor is most ignominiously begged for by humble, learned men. On the Stage it is even worse. Actually, in society they do not know anything, although they judge everything; but in the theater, learned in the learning of men and philosophers, thanks to the authors, they crush our Sex with its own talents, and the imbecile Audiences go right ahead and learn from women

* It is not out of thoughtlessness that I cite Cénie here, although this charming Play is the work of a woman. For, seeking the truth in good faith, I cannot disguise what happens contrary to my opinion. And it is not to a woman that I refuse the talents of men, but to women, I am all the more willing to praise the talents of the author of *Cénie* in particular, because I have suffered from her words and can thus render her a pure and disinterested homage, as are all those issued from my pen.

** They gave them many honorable names that we have no more or that are low and outdated for us. It is well known what use Virgil made of the name *Matres* on an occasion when the Trojan Mothers were not very prudent.[42] We have in their place only the word *Ladies (Dames)* which is not suitable for all, which is even gradually becoming antiquated, and has been completely banished from elegant usage. I observe that the ancients drew their titles of honor preferably from the rights of nature, while we draw ours only from the rights of rank.

*** If they did otherwise in tragedies, it is because, following the political system of their theater, they were not distressed if it were believed that persons of a high rank have no need of modesty and are always exceptions to the rules of morality.

what they took efforts to dictate to them. All of this, in truth, is to make fun of them, to tax them with a puerile vanity; and I do not doubt that the prudent among them are indignant about it. Look through most contemporary plays; it is always a woman who knows everything, who teaches everything to men. It is always the court Lady who makes the little Jean de Saintré[44] repeat his catechism. A child would not be able to eat his bread if it were not cut by his governess. This is the image of what goes on in our new plays. The Maid is on the stage and the children in the audience. Once more, I do not deny that this method has its advantages and that such preceptors can give weight and value to their lessons. But let us return to my question. I ask, which is more honorable to women and best renders to their Sex the true respects due it, the ancient way or ours?

The same cause which gives the ascendancy to women over men in our tragic and comic plays gives it also to the young over the old, and this is another perversion of natural relations which is no less reprehensible. Since the concern is always for the lovers, it follows that the older characters can only play subordinate roles. Either, to form the problem of the plot, they serve as obstacles to the wishes of the young lovers and are then detestable; or they are themselves in love and are ridiculous. *Turpe senex miles.*[45] Older people are tyrants and usurpers in tragedy; in comedies, they are jealous men, moneylenders, pedants, and insufferable fathers whom everybody conspires to fool. This is the honorable view given of old age in the theater; this is the respect for it with which the young are inspired. Let us thank the illustrious author of *Zaïre* and *Nanine* for having protected the venerable Luzignan and the good old Philippe Humbert from this contempt. There are a few others too. But do these suffice to stop the torrent of public prejudice and to efface the degradation most authors delight in attaching to the age of wisdom, experience, and authority? Who can doubt that the habit of always seeing old persons in the Theater as odious characters helps them to be rejected in Society, and that, in accustoming us to confound those who are seen in society with the babblers and Dotards of Comedy, they all end up being equally despised? Observe in a group at Paris the satisfied and vain air, the firm and decisive tone of an impudent younger generation, while the Old, timid and modest, either do not dare to open their mouths or are hardly listened to. Is anything similar seen in the provinces and in the places where the Theater is not established? And everywhere on earth, outside of the big cities, do not a grey beard and white hair always command respect? I will be told that in Paris the old contribute to making themselves contemptible by giving up the bearing which is appropriate to

them and by indecently taking on the costume and the ways of the young; and that, since they play gallants after the fashion of youth, it is only natural that youth be preferred to them in its own trade. But, all to the contrary, it is because they have no other means to make themselves tolerated that they are constrained to fall back on this one; and they prefer to be tolerated for their absurdity rather than to be entirely banished. Assuredly, it is not that by playing at being attractive they become so, or that a gallant sexagenarian is a very gracious personage. But his very unseemliness turns to his profit. It is one more triumph for a woman who, dragging a Nestor in her train, thinks she proves thereby that glacial age is not proof against the flame she inspires. That is why women encourage these Deans of Citherea as much as they can, and have the malice to treat as charming men, old lunatics whom they would find less likeable if they were less absurd. But, let us return to my subject.

These effects are not the only ones produced by a Stage whose sole interest is founded on love. Many others, graver and more important, are attributed to it, the reality of which I shall not examine here but which have often been powerfully alleged by the ecclesiastical Writers. They have been answered that the dangers a depiction of a contagious passion can produce are guarded against by the way it is presented. The love that is played in the theater is made legitimate; its end is decent; often, it is sacrificed to duty and virtue; and, as soon as it is guilty, it is punished. Very well; but is it not ridiculous to pretend that the motions of the heart can be governed, after the event, according to the precepts of reason, and that the results must be awaited to know what impression ought to be made by the situations which lead to them? The harm for which the theater is reproached is not precisely that of inspiring criminal passions but of disposing the soul to feelings which are too tender and which are later satisfied at the expense of virtue. The sweet emotions that are felt are not in themselves a definite object, but they produce the need for one. They do not precisely cause love, but they prepare the way for its being experienced. They do not choose the person who ought to be loved, but they force us to make this choice. Thus, they are innocent or criminal only from the use that we make of them according to our character, and this character is independent of the example. Even if it were true that only legitimate passions are painted in the theater, does it follow that the impressions are weaker, that the effects are less dangerous? As if the lively images of an innocent tenderness were less sweet, less seductive, less capable of inflaming a sensitive heart than those of a criminal love to which at least the horror of vice serves as a counter-poison? But, if the idea of innocence embellishes for a few moments the sentiment that it

accompanies, the circumstances are soon effaced from the memory, while the impression of such a sweet passion remains engraved in the depths of the heart. When the Patrician Manilius was driven from the Senate of Rome for having kissed his wife in the presence of his daughter, considering this action only in itself, what had he done that was reprehensible?[46] Nothing, unquestionably; the kiss even gave expression to a laudable sentiment. But the chaste flames of the mother could inspire impure ones in the daughter. Hence, an example for corruption could be taken from a very decent action. This is the effect of the theater's permissible loves.

It is pretended that we can be cured of love by the depiction of its weaknesses. I do not know how the authors go about it; but I see that the spectators are always on the side of the weak lover and that they are often distressed when he is not even weaker. I ask if that is quite the way to avoid resembling him?

Recall, Sir, a play that I believe I remember seeing with you some years ago and that gave us a pleasure we hardly expected, whether the author put more theatrical beauties in it than we had thought or whether the actress lent her wonted charm to the role, which she brought to a fuller realization. I mean the *Bérénice* of Racine. In what state of mind does the viewer see this play begin? With a sentiment of contempt for an Emperor and a Roman who sways, like the lowest of men, between his mistress and his duty; who, drifting incessantly in a shameful incertitude, debases by effeminate complaints that almost divine character given him by history, who makes us look for the benefactor of the world and the delight of humankind in a vile salon wooer. What does the same spectator think after the performance? He ends up pitying this sensitive man whom he despised, by being concerned with the same passion which he considered criminal, by secretly grumbling at the sacrifice he is forced to make for the laws of his Fatherland. This is what both of us experienced at the performance. The role of Titus, very well played, would have been effective if it had been up to the level of the man. But everyone felt that the principal concern was for Bérénice and that it was the fate of her love which determined the character of the catastrophe. Not that her continual complaints produced a great emotion during the course of the play; but, when in the fifth act, she ceased to complain, and with a bleak air, a dry eye, and a dull voice, gave expression to a cold misery approaching despair, the art of the actress combined with the pathos of the role; and the spectators, deeply moved, began to cry when Bérénice cried no more. What did this mean, if not that we feared that she would be sent away, that we felt beforehand the pain that would overwhelm her heart, and that everyone wanted Titus to let himself be overcome, even at the

risk of respecting him less? Is this not a tragedy which has attained its object and which has taught the spectators to surmount the weaknesses of love?

The conclusion disappoints these secret wishes, but what difference does it make? The outcome does not erase the effect of the play. The Queen departs without the leave of the Audience. The Emperor sends her away *invitus invitam;* one might add, *invito spectatore.*[47] Titus can very well remain a Roman; he is the only one on his side; all the spectators have married Bérénice.

Even if this effect could be disputed; even if it be maintained that the example of force and virtue that is manifested in Titus, conqueror of himself, is the root of the Play's appeal and makes it possible that in pitying Bérénice we are glad to do so, this would only go to prove my principles. This is because, as I have said, the sacrifices made to duty and virtue always have a secret charm, even for corrupted hearts; and the proof that this sentiment is not the work of the play is that they have it before it begins. But that does not prevent certain passions satisfied from seeming to them preferable to virtue itself; nor does it mean that, although content to see Titus virtuous and magnanimous, they would not be even more so if they saw him happy and weak, or, at least, that they would not readily agree to be so in his place. To render this truth palpable, imagine an outcome completely contrary to the author's. After having once again consulted his heart, Titus, wanting neither to violate Rome's laws nor to sell out his happiness to ambition, comes, with contrary maxims, to abdicate the Throne at the feet of Bérénice; affected by such a great sacrifice, she feels it her duty to refuse the hand of her lover, but nevertheless accepts it. Both, intoxicated by the charms of love, peace, and innocence, renounce vain greatness and, with that sweet joy that the true impulses of nature inspire, choose to go and live, happy and neglected, in some corner of the earth. Let this touching scene be animated with the tender and moving sentiments which the subject furnishes and which Racine would have put to such effective use. Give Titus a speech addressed to the Romans on taking his leave of them that is appropriate to the circumstance and the subject; is it not clear that, unless the author is unusually clumsy, such a speech will make the whole assemblage dissolve in tears? The play, ending thus, will be, if you please, less good, less instructive, less conformable to history; but will it cause less pleasure, and will the spectators leave less satisfied? The first four acts would remain pretty much as they are; nevertheless, an entirely contrary lesson would be drawn from them. So true is it that the depictions of love always make a greater impression than the maxims of wisdom, and

that the total effect of a tragedy is entirely independent of the effect of the outcome.*

Do you wish to know if it is certain that tragedy, in showing the fatal consequences of immoderate passions, teaches us to protect ourselves against them? Consult your experience. These fatal consequences are very strongly represent in *Zaïre.* They cost the lives of the two lovers and far more than the life of Orosmane, since he takes his life only to deliver himself from the most painful sentiment that can touch a human heart: remorse for having stabbed his mistress. These are, assuredly, most forceful lessons. I should be interested to find someone, man or woman, who would dare to boast of having left a performance of *Zaïre* well armed against love. As for me, I think I hear every Spectator saying in his heart at the end of the tragedy: Ah, would that I were given a Zaïre; I should see to it that I should not have to kill her. If women themselves do not tire of flocking to this enchanting play, or of making men flock to it too, I cannot say that they do so to strengthen, by the Heroine's example, their resolves not to imitate a sacrifice which turns out so badly for her; rather, of all the tragedies of the theater, no other shows with more charm the power of love and the empire of beauty, and, as a premium, one is taught by it never to judge one's mistress by appearances. When Orosmane sacrifices Zaïre to his jealousy, a sensible woman looks on the transports of the passion without terror; for it is a lesser misfortune to perish by the hand of her lover than to be poorly loved by him.

However love is depicted for us, it seduces or it is not love. If it is badly depicted, the play is bad. If it is well depicted, it overshadows everything that accompanies it. Its combats, its troubles, its sufferings, make it still more touching than if it had no resistance to overcome. Far from its sad effects putting us off, love becomes only more appealing by its very misfortunes. We say, in spite of ourselves, that such a delicious sentiment makes up for everything. So sweet an image softens the heart without its being noticed. We take from the passion that part which leads to pleasure, and put aside that which torments. No one thinks he is obliged to be a Hero; and it is thus that in admiring decent love one abandons oneself to criminal love.

What succeeds in making these images dangerous is precisely what is done to make them agreeable; love never reigns on the stage other than in decent souls; the two lovers are always models of perfection. And how could one fail to be attracted by such a seductive passion between two

* In the seventh volume of *Pamela*[48] there is a very judicious study of Racine's *Andromache* from which it can be seen that this Play attains its pretended goal no better than all the others.

hearts whose characters are already so attractive in themselves? I doubt whether in our entire drama one single play can be found in which mutual love does not have the favor of the spectator. If some unlucky fellow is inflamed by an unreciprocated passion, he becomes the butt of the audience. The poets think they are working wonders in making a lover estimable or detestable according to whether he is well or ill received in his loves, in making the public always approve the sentiments of his Mistress, and in investing tenderness with all the attractiveness of virtue. They ought, rather, to teach the young to distrust the illusions of love, to flee the error of a blind penchant which always believes that it founds itself on esteem, and to be afraid of confiding a virtuous heart to an object that is sometimes unworthy of its attentions. I know of no other play than the *Misanthrope* in which the Hero made a bad choice.* To make the misanthrope fall in love was nothing; the stroke of genius was to make him fall in love with a coquette. All the rest of the theater is a treasury of perfect women. One would say that they have all taken refuge there. Is this a faithful likeness of society? Is this the way to render suspect a passion which destroys so many well-endowed persons? We are almost made to believe that a decent man is obliged to be in love and that a woman who is loved can be nothing other than virtuous. In this way we are very well instructed indeed!

Once more, I do not undertake to judge if we do well or ill in founding the principal interest of the theater on love. But I do say that, if its pictures are sometimes dangerous, they are always so, whatever may be done to disguise them. I say that it is to speak in bad faith or in ignorance when its impressions are expected to be rectified by other foreign impressions which do not accompany them to the heart, or which the heart has soon separated out—impressions which even disguise the dangers and give to this perfidious sentiment a new charm with which it destroys those who abandon themselves to it.

Whether we deduce from the nature of the Theater in general its best possible forms, or whether we examine all that the learning of an enlightened age and people has done for the perfection of ours, I believe that we can conclude from these diverse considerations that the moral effect of the theater can never be good or salutary in itself, since, in reckoning only its advantages, we find no kind of real utility without drawbacks which outweigh it. Now, as a consequence of its very lack of utility, the theater, which can do nothing to improve morals, can do much toward changing them. In encouraging all our penchants, it gives a new ascendency to

* Add *Le Marchand de Londres,*[49] an admirable play the moral of which is more to the point than that of any French play I know.

those which dominate us. The continual emotion which is felt in the theater excites us, enervates us, enfeebles us, and makes us less able to resist our passions. And the sterile interest taken in virtue serves only to satisfy our amour-propre without obliging us to practice it. Hence, those of my compatriots who do not disapprove of the theater in itself are in error.

Beyond these effects of the theater, which are relative to what is performed, there are others no less necessary which relate directly to the Stage and to the persons who perform; and it is to them that the previously mentioned Genevans attribute the taste for luxury, adornment, and dissipation, whose introduction among us they rightly fear. It is not only the frequenting of actors, but also the frequenting of the theater, which, because of the costumes and jewelry of the players, can introduce this taste. If the theater had no other effect than to interrupt the course of civil and domestic affairs at certain hours and to offer an assured resource to idleness, it is impossible that the opportunity of going every day to the same place to forget oneself and becoming involved with foreign objects should not give other habits to the Citizen and form new morals for him. But will these changes be advantageous or harmful? This is a question that depends less on the consideration of the theater than on that of the Spectators. It is certain that these changes will bring them all pretty nearly to the same point. It is, then, from the situation of each at the beginning that the differences must be estimated.

When amusements are by their nature indifferent (and I am willing to consider the theater as such for now), it is the nature of the occupations which they interrupt that causes them to be judged good or bad, especially when the amusements are engaging enough to become occupations themselves and to substitute the taste for them in place of that for work. Reason dictates the encouragement of the amusements of people whose occupations are harmful, and the turning away from the same amusements of those whose occupations are beneficial. Another general consideration is that it is not good to leave the choice of their amusements to idle and corrupted men lest they think up ones which conform to their vicious inclinations and become as mischievous in their pleasures as in their business. But let a simple and hardworking people relax from its labors when and as it pleases; one need never fear that it will abuse this liberty, and one need not trouble oneself looking for agreeable recreations for it. For, just as little preparation is needed for the food that is seasoned by abstinence and hunger, not much is needed for the pleasures of men exhausted by fatigue, for whom repose alone is a very sweet pleasure. In a big city, full of scheming, idle people without Religion or principle, whose imagination, depraved by sloth, inactivity, the love of

pleasure, and great needs, engenders only monsters and inspires only crimes; in a big city, where morals and honor are nothing because each, easily hiding his conduct from the public eye, shows himself only by his reputation and is esteemed only for his riches; in a big city, I say, the police can never increase the number of pleasures permitted too much or apply itself too much to making them agreeable in order to deprive individuals of the temptation of seeking more dangerous ones. Since preventing them from occupying themselves is to prevent them from doing harm, two hours a day stolen from the activity of vice prevents the twelfth part of the crimes that would be committed. And all the discussions in Cafés and other refuges of the do-nothings and rascals of the place occasioned by plays seen or to be seen are also that much the more gained by family Men, either for their daughters' honor or that of their wives, or for their purse or that of their sons.

But in small cities, in less populated places where individuals, always in the public eye, are born censors of one another and where the police can easily watch everyone, contrary maxims must be followed. If there are industry, arts, and manufactures, care must be taken against offering distractions which relax the greedy interest that finds its pleasures in its efforts and enriches the Prince from the avarice of his subjects. If the country, without commerce, nourishes its inhabitants in inaction, far from fomenting idleness in them, to which they are already only too susceptible because of their simple and easy life, their life must be rendered insufferable in constraining them, by dint of boredom, to employ time usefully which they could not abuse. I see that in Paris, where everything is judged by appearances because there is no leisure to examine anything, it is believed, on the basis of the apparent inactivity and listlessness which strikes one at first glance in provincial towns, that the inhabitants, plunged in a stupid inactivity, either simply vegetate or only pester one another and quarrel. This is an error which could easily be corrected if it were remembered that most of the Literary men who shine in Paris and most of the useful discoveries and new inventions come from these despised provinces. Stay some time in a little town where you had at first believed you would find only automatons; not only will you soon see there men a great deal more sensible than your big-city monkeys, but you will rarely fail to discover in obscurity there some ingenious man who will surprise you by his talents and his works, who you will surprise even more in admiring them, and who, in showing you prodigies of work, patience, and industry, will think he is showing you only what is ordinary at Paris. Such is the simplicity of true Genius. It is neither scheming nor busybodyish; it knows not the path of honors and fortune nor dreams

of seeking it; it compares itself to no one; all its resources are within itself; indifferent to insult and hardly conscious of praise, if it is aware of itself, it does not assign itself a place and enjoys itself without appraising itself.

In a little town, proportionately less activity is unquestionably to be found than in a capital, because the passions are less intense and the needs less pressing, but more original spirits, more inventive industry, more really new things are found there because the people are less imitative; having few models, each draws more from himself and puts more of his own in everything he does; because the human mind, less spread out, less drowned in vulgar opinions, elaborates itself and ferments better in tranquil solitude; because, in seeing less, more is imagined; finally, because less pressed for time, there is more leisure to extend and digest one's ideas.

I remember having seen in my youth a very pleasant sight, one perhaps unique on earth, in the vicinity of Neufchatel; an entire mountain covered with dwellings each one of which constitutes the center of the lands which belong to it, so that these houses, separated by distances as equal as the fortunes of the proprietors, offer to the numerous inhabitants of this mountain both the tranquillity of a retreat and the sweetness of Society. These happy farmers, all in comfortable circumstances, free of poll-taxes, duties, commissioners, and forced labor, cultivate with all possible care lands the produce of which is theirs, and employ the leisure that tillage leaves them to make countless artifacts with their hands and to put to use the inventive genius which nature gave them. In the winter especially, a time when the deep snows prevent easy communication, each, warmly closed up with his big family in his pretty and clean wooden house,* which he has himself built, busies himself with enjoyable labors which drive boredom from his sanctuary and add to his well-being. Never did Carpenter, Locksmith, Glazier, or Turner enter this country; each is everything for himself, no one is anything for another. Among the many comfortable and even elegant pieces of furniture which make up their household and adorn their lodgings, none is ever seen which was not made by the hand of the master. They still have leisure time left over in which to invent and make all sorts of instruments of steel, wood, and cardboard which they sell to foreigners; many of these

* I can hear a Paris wit, provided he is not himself giving the reading, protesting at this point, as at many others, and learnedly proving to the Ladies (for it is chiefly to Ladies that these Gentlemen make proofs) that it is impossible that a wooden house be warm. Vulgar falsehood! Error in physics! Alas, poor author! As for me, I think the demonstration is irrefutable. All that I know is that the Swiss spend their winter warmly in the midst of snows in wooden houses.

even get to Paris, among others those little wooden clocks that have been seen there during the last few years. They also make some of iron, and even make watches. And, what seems unbelievable, each joins in himself all the various crafts into which watchmaking is subdivided and makes all his tools himself.

This is not all. They have useful books and are tolerably well educated. They reason sensibly about everything and about many things with brilliance.* They make syphons, magnets, spectacles, pumps, barometers, and cameras obscura. Their tapestry consists of masses of instruments of every sort; you would take a Farmer's living room for a mechanic's workshop and for a laboratory in experimental physics. All know how to sketch, paint, and calculate a bit; most play the flute, many know something of the principles of music and can sing true. These arts are not taught them by masters but are passed down, as it were, by tradition. Of those I saw who knew music, one would tell me he had learned it from his father, another from his aunt, and a third from his cousin; some thought they had always known it. One of their most frequent amusements is to sing Psalms in four parts with their wives and children; and one is amazed to hear issuing from rustic cabins the strong and masculine harmony of Goudimel so long forgotten by our learned artists.

I could no more tire of wandering among these charming dwellings than could the inhabitants of offering me the frankest hospitality. Unhappily I was young; my curiosity was only that of a child, and I thought more of amusing myself than learning. In thirty years the few observations I made have been erased from my memory. I only remember that I continually admired in these singular men an amazing combination of delicacy and simplicity that would be believed to be almost incompatible and that I have never since observed elsewhere. Otherwise I remember nothing of their morals, their society, or characters. Today, when I would bring other eyes to it, am I never again to see that happy land? Alas, it is on the road to my own.

After this sketch, let us suppose that at the summit of the mountain of which I have spoken, amidst the dwellings, a standing and inexpensive Theater be established under the pretext, for example, of providing a decent recreation for people otherwise constantly busy and able to bear this little expense. Let us further suppose that they get a taste for this Theater, and let us investigate what will be the results of its establishment.

* I can cite, as an example, a man of merit well known in Paris and more than once honored by the suffrages of the Academy of Sciences. It is M. Rivaz, an illustrious Valaisan. I know that he does not have many equals among his compatriots; but it was in living as they do that he learned how to surpass them.

I see, in the first place, that their labors will cease to be their amusements and that, as soon as they have a new amusement, it will undermine their taste for the old ones; zeal will no longer furnish so much leisure nor the same inventions. Moreover, every day there will be real time lost for those who go to the Theater, and they will no longer go right back to work, since their thoughts will be full of what they have just seen; they will talk about it and think about it. Consequently, slackening of work: first disadvantage.

However little is paid at the door, they do pay. It is still an expense that was not previously made. It costs for oneself and for one's wife and children when they are taken along, and sometimes they must be. In addition, a worker does not present himself in an assembly in his working clothes. He must put on his Sunday clothes, change linen, and powder and shave himself more often; all this costs time and money. Increase of expenses: second disadvantage.

Less assiduous work and larger expenses exact a compensation; it will be found in the price of what is produced, which must be made dearer. Many merchants, driven off by this increase, will leave the Mountaineers* and supply themselves from the neighboring Swiss who, being no less industrious, will have no Theater and will not increase their prices. Decrease in trade: third disadvantage.

During bad weather the roads are not passable; and, since the company must live in these seasons too, it will not interrupt its performances. Hence, making the Theater accessible at all seasons cannot be avoided. In the winter, roads must be made in the snow and, perhaps, paved; and God grant that they do not put up lanterns. Now there are public expenses and, in consequence, contributions from individuals. Establishment of taxes: fourth disadvantage.

The wives of the Mountaineers, going first to see and then to be seen, will want to be dressed and dressed with distinction. The wife of the Chief Magistrate will not want to present herself at the theater attired like the schoolmaster's. The schoolmaster's wife will strive to be attired like the Chief Magistrate's. Out of this will soon emerge a competition in dress which will ruin the husbands, will perhaps win them over, and which will find countless new ways to get around the sumptuary laws. Introduction of luxury: fifth disadvantage.

All the rest is easy to imagine. Without taking into consideration the other disadvantages of which I have spoken or will speak in what follows, without investigating the sort of theater and its moral effects, I confine

* This is the name given to the inhabitants of this mountain in that country.

myself to arguments which have to do with work and gain; and I believe I have shown, by an evident inference, how a prosperous people, but one which owes its well-being to its industry, exchanging reality for appearance, ruins itself at the very moment it wants to shine.

Moreover, my supposition ought not to be objected to as chimerical. I present it merely as such and only want to render its inevitable consequences more or less obvious. Take away some circumstances and you will find other Mountaineers elsewhere; and *mutatis mutandis,* the example has its application.

Thus, even if it were true that the theater is not bad in itself, it would remain to be investigated if it does not become so in respect to the people for which it is destined. In certain places it will be useful for attracting foreigners; for increasing the circulation of money; for stimulating artists; for varying the fashions; for occupying those who are too rich or aspire to be so; for making them less mischievous; for distracting the people from its miseries; for making it forget its leaders in seeing its buffoons; for maintaining and perfecting taste when decency is lost; for covering the ugliness of vice with the polish of forms; in a word, for preventing bad morals from degenerating into brigandage. In other places it would only serve to destroy the love of work; to discourage industry; to ruin individuals; to inspire them with the taste for idleness; to make them seek for the means of subsistence without doing anything; to render a people inactive and slack; to prevent it from seeing the public and private goals with which it ought to busy itself; to turn prudence to ridicule; to substitute a theatrical jargon for the practice of the virtues; to make metaphysic of all morality; to turn citizens into wits, housewives into Bluestockings, and daughters into sweethearts out of the Drama. The general effect will be the same on all men; but the men thus changed will suit their country more or less. In becoming equals, the bad will gain and the good will lose still more; all will contract a soft disposition and a spirit of inaction which will deprive the good of great virtues but will keep the bad from meditating great crimes.

From these new reflections results a consequence directly opposed to the one I drew from the first,[50] namely, that when the people is corrupted, the Theater is good for it, and bad for it when it is itself good. It would, hence, seem that these two contrary effects would destroy one another and the Theater remain indifferent to both. But there is this difference: the effect which re-enforces the good and the bad, since it is drawn from the spirit of the plays, is subject, as are they, to countless modifications which reduce it to practically nothing, while the effect which changes the good into bad and the bad into good, resulting from

the very existence of a Theater, is a real, constant one which returns every day and must finally prevail.

It follows from this that, in order to decide if it is proper or not to establish a theater in a certain town, we must know in the first place if the morals are good or bad there, a question concerning which it is perhaps not for me to answer with regard to us. However that may be, all that I can admit about this is that it is true that the Drama will not harm us if nothing at all can harm us any more.

To forestall the disadvantages which could be born of the Actors' example, you would want them to be forced to be decent men. By this means, you say, we would have both theater and morals, and we would join the advantages of both. Theater and morals! This would really be Something to see,[51] so much the more so as it would be the first time. But what are the means that you indicate to us for restraining the Actors? Severe and well-executed laws. This is to admit at least that the actors must be restrained and that the means of doing it are not easy. Severe laws? The first is not to tolerate them. If we infringe this one, what will become of the severity of the others? Well-executed laws? The question is whether this is possible; for the force of the laws has its measure, and the force of the vices that they repress has one too. It is only after one has compared these two quantities and found that the former surpasses the latter that the execution of the laws can be depended upon. The knowledge of these relations constitutes the true Legislator's science. For if it had to do only with publishing Edict after Edict, regulation after regulation, to remedy abuses as they arise, doubtless many very fine things would be said, but which, for the most part, would remain without effect and would serve as indications of what would need to be done rather than as means toward executing it. On the whole, the institution of laws is not such a marvelous thing that any man of sense and equity could not easily find those which, well observed, would be the most beneficial for society. Where is the least student of the law who cannot erect a moral code as pure as that of Plato's laws? But this is not the only issue. The problem is to adapt this code to the People for which it is made and to the things about which it decrees to such an extent that its execution follows from the very conjunction of these relations; it is to impose on the People, after the fashion of Solon, less the best laws in themselves than the best of which it admits in the given situation. Otherwise, it is better to let the disorders subsist than to forestall them, or take steps thereto, by Laws which will not be observed. For without remedying the evil, this degrades the laws too.

Another observation, no less important, is that matters of morals and

universal justice are not arranged, as are those of private justice and strict right, by Edicts and Laws; or, if sometimes the Laws influence morals, it is when the laws draw their force from them. Then they return to morals this same force by a sort of reaction well known to real political thinkers. The first function of the Spartan Ephors upon taking office was a public proclamation in which they enjoined the citizens not to observe but to love the laws, so that their observation would not be hard.[52] This proclamation, which was not an idle formula, shows perfectly the spirit of the Spartan regime in which laws and morals, intimately united in the hearts of the citizens, made, as it were, only one single body. But let us not flatter ourselves that we shall see Sparta reborn in the lap of commerce and the love of gain. If we had the same maxims, a Theater could be established at Geneva without any risk; for never would Citizen or Townsman set foot in it.

By what means can the government get a hold on morals? I answer that it is by public opinion. If our habits in retirement are born of our own sentiments, in Society they are born of others' opinions. When we do not live in ourselves but in others, it is their judgments which guide everything. Nothing appears good or desirable to individuals which the public has not judged to be such, and the only happiness which most men know is to be esteemed happy.

As to the choice of instruments proper to the direction of public opinion, that is another question which it would be superfluous to resolve for you and which it is not here the place to resolve for the multitude. I shall content myself with showing by an evident example that these instruments are neither laws nor punishments nor any sort of coercive means. This example is before your eyes; I take it from your fatherland; it is the tribunal of the Marshals of France established as supreme judges on points of honor.[53]

What was the reason for this institution? It was established to change public opinion about duels, the redress of offenses and the occasions when a brave man is obliged, under penalty of disgrace, to get satisfaction for an affront with sword in hand. From this it follows:

First, that, force having no power over minds, it was necessary to dismiss with the greatest of care every vestige of violence from the Tribunal established to work this change. The very word *Tribunal* was badly conceived; I should prefer *Court of Honor.* Its sole arms ought to have been honor and disgrace—never useful recompense, never corporal punishment, no prison, no arrests, no armed Guards, simply an apparitor who would have served his summonses by touching the defendant with a white rod, without any other constraint following upon that to make

him appear. It is true that not to appear before the Judges on the specified date would be to confess to being without defense and to condemn oneself. The natural consequence would be a mark of disgrace, degradation in nobility, unfitness to serve the King in his tribunals and armies, and other punishments of this sort which have directly to do with opinion or are a necessary effect of it.

In the second place, it follows that, to uproot the public prejudice, Judges of great authority on the matter in question were needed. And, on this point, the founder entered perfectly into the spirit of the institution. For, in a very warlike Nation, who can better judge of the just occasions to show one's courage and on which offended honor demands satisfaction, than old soldiers laden with honorable titles who have grown gray with their laurels, and proved a hundred times at the cost of their blood that they are not unaware when duty demands that it be spilled.

It follows, in the third place, that, since nothing is more independent of the supreme power than the judgment of the public, the sovereign ought to have taken care in all things not to mix his arbitrary decisions in with the decrees meant to represent and, what is more, to determine this judgment. He ought, on the contrary, to have endeavoured to put the Court of Honor above himself as though he were subject to its respectable sentences himself. It was hence wrong to begin by condemning all duelists indiscriminately to death; this created straight-off a shocking opposition between honor and the law; for even the law cannot oblige anyone to dishonor himself. If the whole people has judged that a man is a poltroon, the King, in spite of all his power, can declare him brave all he wishes and no one will believe a bit of it; and the man, passing then for a poltroon who wants to be honored by force, will be only the more despised. As to what the Edicts say, that to fight is to offend God, this is undoubtedly a very pious opinion; but the civil law is no judge of sins, and every time that the sovereign authority wants to interpose itself in the conflicts between honor and Religion, it will be compromised on both sides. The same Edicts reason no better when they say that instead of fighting, the Marshals must be consulted; to condemn combat without distinction or reserve in this way is to begin by judging beforehand what is referred to their judgment. It is known that it is not permitted to them to accord a duel even when insulted honor has no other recourse; and, according to the prejudices of society, there are many such cases. For, as to the ceremonious satisfactions which have been offered to the offended persons, they are really child's play.

By artfully manipulating the maxim that a man has the right to accept a compensation and pardon his enemy, it can be gradually substituted for

the ferocious prejudice it attacks; but it is not the same when the honor of persons is attacked with whom our own is connected. From this moment on there is no further accommodation possible. If my Father has been slapped, my sister, wife, or mistress insulted, shall I preserve my honor in selling theirs cheaply? There are neither marshals nor satisfactions which suffice; I must get revenge for them or dishonor myself; the Edicts leave me only the choice of torture or disgrace. To cite an example which relates to my subject, is it not a well-balanced harmony between the spirit of the Stage and that of the laws, when we go to the theater to applaud the same Cid whom we would go to see hanged at the Grève?[54]

Thus we can do what we like; neither reason, nor virtue nor laws will vanquish public opinion, so long as the art of changing it has not been found. Once again, this art has nothing to do with violence. If they were put into practice, the established means would serve only to punish the brave and spare the cowards; but, happily, they are too absurd to be used and have served only to change the name of duels. How ought it to have been gone about? Private combats, it seems to me, ought to have been submitted absolutely to the jurisdiction of the Marshals, either to judge them, to prevent them, or even to permit them. Not only ought they to have been allowed the right to grant combat when they judged it appropriate; but it was important that they sometimes exercise this right, if only to rid the public of an idea rather difficult to do away with and which by itself annuls all their authority, which is, that in the affairs which pass before them, they follow less their own sentiment than the will of the Prince. Then there would have been no shame in asking them to permit combat on a necessary occasion; there would have been none even in refraining from doing so when the reasons for granting it were not judged sufficient. But there always will be shame to say to them: I have been offended; arrange it so that I will not have to fight.

By this means, all secret challenges would surely have fallen into disrepute, since, honor offended being able to defend itself, and courage being able to show itself on the field of honor, those who had hidden themselves to fight would have been quite justly suspect, and those whom the Court of Honor judged to have fought badly* would have been turned over to the criminal courts as vile assassins. I admit that, since many duels would have been judged only after the fact and others even solemnly authorized, it would have, at first, cost the lives of some brave men; but it would have been to save the lives of countless others afterwards; whereas,

* Badly, that is to say not only in a cowardly and fraudulent way, but unjustly, and without sufficient reason, which would naturally be presumed of any affair not brought before the tribunal.

from the blood which is spilled in spite of the edicts, there arises a reason for spilling even more.

What would have happened afterwards? As the Court of Honor acquired authority over the opinion of the people by the wisdom and the weight of its decisions, it would little by little have become more severe until the legitimate occasions had been reduced to nothingness, the point of honor had changed principles, and duels were entirely abolished. In truth, all this effort did not have to be taken, but also a useless institution was founded. If duels are rarer today, it is not because they are despised or punished, but because the morals have changed.* And the proof that this change comes from entirely different causes in which the government has no part, the proof that public opinion has in no wise changed on this point, is that, after so many ill-conceived pains, any Gentleman who does not get satisfaction for an affront with sword in hand is no less dishonored than before.

A fourth consequence of the object of the same institution is that, no man being able to live civilly without honor, all the estates in which one carries a sword, from Prince to Private Soldier, and even all the estates in which one is not worn, ought to be under the jurisdiction of this Court of Honor; the former to give an account of their conduct and their actions, the others of their speeches and their maxims; all equally subject to being honored or stigmatized according to the conformity or the opposition of their lives or sentiments to the principles of honor established in the Nation and gradually reformed by the Tribunal on the basis of those of justice and reason. To limit this competence to the nobles and the soldiers is to cut the shoots and leave the root; for if the point of honor makes the Nobility act, it makes the people talk; the former fight only because the others judge them; and to change the actions of which public esteem is the object, the judgments that are made about them must be changed beforehand. I am convinced that we will never succeed in working these changes without bringing about the intervention of women, on whom men's way of thinking in large measure depends.

From this principle it follows, moreover, that the tribunal ought to be more or less dreaded in the various ranks in proportion to their having more or less honor to lose according to the vulgar ideas which must

* Formerly, men quarrelled in taverns; they have been given a distaste for this crude pleasure by being given others at a low price. Formerly, they slew one another for a Mistress; in living more familiarly with women, they have found that it was not worth the effort to fight for them. Drunkenness and love set aside, there remain few important subjects for dispute. In society one now fights only over gambling. Soldiers fight only over undue favor or in order not to be forced to leave the service. In this Age of enlightenment, everyone knows how to calculate to the penny the worth of his honor and his life.

always be taken here as rules. If the institution is well constructed, the Grandees and the Princes ought to tremble at the very name of *Court of Honor.* When it was established, all the personal quarrels then existing among the first men of the Realm ought to have been brought before it; the Tribunal would have judged them definitively in so far as is possible by the laws of honor alone; these judgments would have been severe; there would have been surrender of privilege and rank, personal and independent of the right of position, prohibition to bear arms or to appear before the Prince, or other similar punishments, nothing in themselves, grievous in opinion, up to total disgrace which would have been regarded as the capital punishment handed down by the Court of Honor. All these punishments would have had, with the support of the supreme authority, the same effects that public judgment naturally has when force does not annul its decisions; the tribunal would not have pronounced about trifles but would have never done anything halfway; the King himself would have been summoned when he threw his cane out the window for fear, he said, of striking a Gentleman;* [55] he would have appeared, as the defendant, with his opponent; he would have been solemnly judged and condemned to make amends for the indirect affront done the Gentleman; and the Tribunal would have at the same time awarded him a prize for the monarch's moderation in anger. This prize, which ought to have been a very simple but conspicuous mark, worn by the King throughout his life, would have been, it seems to me, an ornament more honorable than those of Royalty, and I do not doubt that it would have become the subject of the refrains of more than one Poet. It is certain that, as to honor, the Kings themselves are more subject than anyone to public judgment and can, consequently, without lowering themselves, appear before the tribunal which represents it. Louis XIV was capable of doing such things; and I believe he would have done them if someone had suggested them to him.

With all of these precautions and other similar ones, it is very doubtful if success could have been attained, because such an institution is entirely contrary to the spirit of Monarchy. But it is quite certain that for having neglected them, for having wanted to mix force and laws in matters of prejudice and change the point of honor by violence, the Royal authority has been compromised and laws which went beyond their power have been rendered contemptible.

However, in what did this prejudice consist that was to be done away with? In the wildest and most barbarous opinion which ever entered the

* M. de Lauzun. This, in my view, would have been a well-administered caning.

human mind, namely, that bravery can take the place of all the duties of society; that a man is no longer a cheat, rascal, or slanderer, that he is civil, humane, and polite when he knows how to fight; that falsehood is changed into truth, robbery becomes legitimate, perfidy honesty, infidelity praiseworthy, as soon as all this is maintained sword in hand; that an affront is always made good by a sword thrust; that a man is never wrong in relation to another provided that he kill him. There is, I admit, another kind of affair in which politeness is mixed with cruelty and men are killed only by accident, that in which one fights to the first blood. To the first blood! Great God! And what do you want to do with this blood, ferocious Beast? Do you want to drink it? How can these things be thought of without emotion? Such are the prejudices that the Kings of France, armed with the whole public force, have attacked in vain. Opinion, queen of the world, is not subject to the power of Kings; they are themselves her first slaves.

I bring to an end this long digression which unhappily will not be the last; and, from this perhaps too dazzling example, *si parva licet componere magnis,*[56] I return to simpler applications. One of the inevitable effects of a theater established in a town as little as ours will be to change our maxims, or, if you please, our prejudices and our public opinions, which will necessarily change our morals for others, better or worse I do not yet say, but assuredly less appropriate to our constitution. I ask, Sir, by what efficient law will you remedy that? If the government can do much in morals, it is only in its primitive institution; when once it has determined them, not only does it no longer have the power to change them without itself changing, it has great difficulty in maintaining them against the inevitable accidents which attack them and the natural inclination which corrupts them. Public opinions, although so difficult to govern, are nevertheless in themselves very mobile and changing. Chance, countless accidental causes, countless unforeseen circumstances, do what force and reason could not; or, rather, it is precisely because chance directs them that force can do nothing; like the dice which leave the hand, whatever impulsion is given them does not bring up the desired point any more easily.

All that human wisdom can do is to forestall changes, to arrest from afar all that brings them on. But, once they are tolerated and authorized, we are rarely master of their effects and cannot be held answerable for them. How then shall we prevent those of which we have voluntarily introduced the cause? In imitation of the institution of which I have just spoken, will you propose to institute Censors? We already have them;*

* The Consistory and the Chamber of the Reformation.[57]

and if the whole force of this tribunal barely suffices to maintain us as we are, when we have added a new inclination to the penchant of morals, what will it do to arrest this progress? It is clear that it will no longer suffice. The first sign of its impotence to forestall the abuses of the Drama will be to permit its establishment. For it is easy to foresee that these two institutions will not long exist side by side, and that the Drama will turn the Censors to ridicule or the Censors will drive out the actors.

But it is not only the insufficiency of the laws in repressing bad morals when their cause is allowed to subsist that is the question here. It will be found, I foresee, that, my mind being filled with the abuses that the Theater necessarily engenders and with the general impossibility of preventing these abuses, I do not respond precisely enough to the expedient proposed, which is, to have Actors who are decent men and women, that is to say, to make them such. At bottom, this special discussion is not really very necessary, since all that I have said up to now about the effects of the Drama is independent of the morals of the Actors, and would take place even if they profited from the lessons which you urge us to give them and became, under our guidance, so many models of virtue. However, out of consideration for the sentiment of those of my compatriots who see no other danger in the Drama than the bad example of the Actors, I want to investigate whether, even on the basis of their supposition, this expedient is practicable with some hope of success and whether it ought to suffice to reassure them.

To begin by observing the facts before reasoning about the causes, I see in general that the estate of the Actor is one of license and bad morals; that the men are given to disorder; that the women lead a scandalous life; that both, avaricious and spendthrift at the same time, always overwhelmed by debts and always spending money in torrents, are as little controlled in their dissipations as they are scrupulous about the means of providing for them. I see, moreover, that in every country their profession is one that dishonors, that those who exercise it, excommunicated or not, are everywhere despised;* and that even in Paris, where they are most respected and behave better than anywhere else, a Man of the Middle Class would be afraid to frequent these same Actors who are seen everyday at the tables of the great. A third observation, no less important, is that this disdain is stronger everywhere the morals are purer, and there

* If the English buried the celebrated Oldfield[58] at the side of their Kings, it was not her profession but her talent that they wanted to honor. With them, great talents ennoble in the smallest stations, little ones abase in the most illustrious. And, as to the actor's profession, the bad and the mediocre are despised in London as much as anywhere else.

are innocent and simple countries where the Actor's profession almost horrifies. These are incontestable facts. You will tell me that they are only the results of prejudice. I agree; but since these prejudices are universal, a universal cause must be sought, and I cannot see that it can be found elsewhere than in the profession itself to which they relate. To that you answer that the actors only make themselves contemptible because they are held in contempt. But why should they have been held in contempt if they had not been contemptible? Why would their estate have been worse thought of than others if there were nothing which distinguished it from them? This is perhaps what must be considered before justifying the actors at the expense of the public.

I could impute these prejudices to the declamations of the Priests, if I did not find them established among the Romans before the birth of Christianity and not only vaguely current in the spirit of the People but authorized by express laws which declared the actors disreputable, stripped them of the name and rights of Roman Citizens, and put the actresses in the class of prostitutes. Here every reason is missing, other than that which is drawn from the nature of the thing. The pagan Priests and the devout were more in favor of, than against, the Theatrical Entertainments which were parts of the games consecrated to Religion,* and had no interest in disparaging the theater nor did they do so. Nevertheless, as soon as this was the case, it was possible to criticize, as you do, the inconsistency of dishonoring people whom we protect, pay, and pension. To tell the truth, it does not seem so strange to me as it does to you; for it is sometimes proper for the State to encourage and protect dishonorable professions, without those who exercise them being more highly considered for that.

I read somewhere that this stigma was less attached to real actors than to Histrions and jesters who soil their entertainment with indecency and obscenity. But this distinction is indefensible; for the words, *actor* and *Histrion,* were perfectly synonymous and had no difference other than that one was Greek and the other Etruscan. Cicero, in his book *On the Orator,*[60] calls the two greatest actors which Rome ever had, Esopus and Roscius, Histrions. In his defense of the latter, Cicero pities so decent a man for exercising so indecent a profession.[61] Far from distinguishing between the Actors, Histrions, and jesters, or between the Actors of Tragedy and those of Comedy, the law indiscriminately covers all those who step on the stage with the same opprobrium. *Quisquis in Scenam*

* Livy says that the theatrical games were introduced into Rome in the year 390 [A.U.C.] on the occasion of a plague which they wanted to stop.[59] Today the Theaters would be closed for the same cause, and surely this would be more reasonable.

prodierit ait Praetor, infamis est.[62] It is true, only, that this opprobrium attached itself less to performing as such than to making a profession of it, inasmuch as the Roman youth publicly performed the *Atellanae* or *Exodia*[63] at the end of the long plays without dishonor. With this exception, it can be observed in countless places that all the actors, without distinction, were slaves and were treated as such when the public was not satisfied with them.

I know of only one people which did not have the same maxims as all the others about this; this is the Greeks. It is certain that among them the profession of the Theater was so little indecent that Greece furnishes examples of Actors charged with certain public functions either in the State or on Embassies. But the reasons for this exception can easily be found. (1) Since Tragedy, as well as Comedy, was invented by the Greeks, they could not in advance put a mark of contempt on an estate the effects of which they did not yet know, and, when they began to be known, public opinion was already fixed. (2) Since Tragedy had something sacred in its origin, at first its actors were regarded as Priests rather than Buffoons. (3) Since all the subjects of the Plays were drawn exclusively from the national antiquities which the Greeks idolized, they saw in these actors less men who played fables than educated Citizens who performed the history of their country so that it could be seen by their compatriots. (4) This People, so enthusiastic about its liberty as to believe that the Greeks were the only men free by nature,* recalled with a vivid sentiment of pleasure its ancient misfortunes and the crimes of its Masters. These great depictions ceaselessly instructed this people who could not prevent themselves from feeling some respect for the organs of this instruction. (5) Tragedy was at first played only by men, so that in their theater this scandalous mixture of men and women, which makes of our theaters so many schools of bad morals, was not to be seen. (6) Finally, their performances had none of the meanness of today's; their theaters were not built by interest and avarice; they were not closed up in dark prisons; their actors had no need to make collections from the spectators or to count out of the corner of their eye the number of people whom they saw coming in the door to be sure of their supper.

These great and proud entertainments, given under the Sky before a whole nation, presented on all sides only combats, victories, prizes, objects capable of inspiring the Greeks with an ardent emulation and of warming their hearts with sentiments of honor and glory. It is in the midst of this imposing array, so fit to elevate one and stir the soul, that

* Iphigenia says it expressly in the tragedy of Euripides which bears the name of this princess.

the actors, animated with the same zeal, shared, according to their talents, the honors rendered to the conquerors of the games, often the first men of the nation. I am not surprised that, far from abasing them, their profession exercised in this manner, gave them that pride of courage and that noble disinterestedness which seemed sometimes to raise the actor to the level of his role. With all of this, never was Greece, Sparta excepted, cited as an example of good morals; and Sparta, which tolerated no theater,* was not concerned with honoring those who appeared in it.

Let us return to the Romans who, far from following the example of the Greeks in this respect, set an entirely contrary one. If their laws declared the Actors disreputable, was it with the design of dishonoring the profession? What would have been the benefit of so cruel a provision? They did not dishonor it, they only gave authoritative expression to the dishonor which is inseparable from it. For never do good laws change the nature of things; they only follow it, and only such laws are obeyed. The point is not to begin by crying out against prejudices but first to know if they are only prejudices, whether the Actor's profession is really not dishonorable in itself. For if unfortunately it is, for all that we decree that it is not, rather than rehabilitating it, we will only abase ourselves.

What is the talent of the actor? It is the art of counterfeiting himself, or putting on another character than his own, of appearing different than he is, of becoming passionate in cold blood, of saying what he does not think as naturally as if he really did think it, and, finally, of forgetting his own place by dint of taking another's. What is the profession of the actor? It is a trade in which he performs for money, submits himself to the disgrace and the affronts that others buy the right to give him, and puts his person publicly on sale. I beg every sincere man to tell if he does not feel in the depths of his soul that there is something servile and base in this traffic of oneself. You philosophers, who have the pretention of being so far above prejudices, would you not all die of shame if, ignominiously gotten up as Kings, you had to take on in the eyes of the public a different role than your own and expose your Majesties to the jeers of the populace? What, then, is the spirit that the Actor receives from his estate? A mixture of abjectness, duplicity, ridiculous conceit, and disgraceful abasement which renders him fit for all sorts of roles except for the most noble of all, that of man, which he abandons.

I know that the Actor's playing is not that of a scoundrel who wants to cheat, that he does not intend to be really taken for the person he represents or to be believed affected by the passions he imitates, and that,

* Concerning this error, see the letter of M. Leroy.[64]

in presenting this imitation for what it is, he renders it entirely innocent. And I do not precisely accuse him of being a deceiver but of cultivating by profession the talent of deceiving men and of becoming adept in habits which can be innocent only in the theater and can serve everywhere else only for doing harm. Will these men, so well adorned, so well practiced in the tone of gallantry and in the accents of passion, never abuse this art to seduce young persons? Will these thieving valets, so subtle with tongue and hand on the Stage, never make a useful application of their art in the interests of a profession more expensive than lucrative, will they never have any useful distractions? Will they never take the purse of a prodigal son or of an avaricious father for that of Léander or Argan?* In all things the temptation to do evil increases with its facility; and Actors must be more virtuous than other men if they are not more corrupt.

The Orator and the Preacher, it could be said, make use of their persons as does the Actor. The difference is, however, very great. When the Orator appears in public, it is to speak and not to Show himself off; he represents only himself; he fills only his own role, speaks only in his own name, says, or ought to say, only what he thinks; the man and the role being the same, he is in his place; he is in the situation of any citizen who fulfils the functions of his estate. But an Actor on the Stage, displaying other sentiments than his own, saying only what he is made to say, often representing a chimerical being, annihilates himself, as it were, and is lost in his Hero. And, in this forgetting of the man, if something remains of him, it is used as the plaything of the spectators. What shall I say of those who seem to be afraid of having too much merit as they are and who degrade themselves to the point of playing characters whom they would be quite distressed to resemble? It is certainly a very bad thing to see so many rascals playing the roles of decent men in society; but is there anything more odious, more shocking, more ignoble, than a decent man playing a rascal's role in the Theater and using all his talent to make criminal maxims convincing, maxims for which he himself has only disgust?

If all of this only seems to give evidence of a not very decent profession, the dissoluteness of the actresses should be seen as another source of bad morals which compels and carries in its wake dissoluteness in the actors. But why is this dissoluteness inevitable? Oh, why! In any other time there would be no need to ask; but, in this Age when prejudices

*This has been objected to as extravagant and ridiculous, and rightly so. There is no vice of which actors are less accused than thievery. Their profession, which keeps them very busy and even gives them sentiments of honor in certain respects, removes them from such baseness. I leave this passage because I have made it a law for myself to remove nothing; but I disavow it in full public view as a very great injustice.[65]

reign so proudly and error gives itself the name of philosophy, men, besotted with their vain learning, have closed their minds to the voice of reason and their hearts to that of nature.

In every station, every country, every class, the two Sexes have so strong and so natural a relation to one another that the morals of the one always determine those of the other. Not that these morals are always the same, but they always have the same degree of goodness, modified by the penchants peculiar to each Sex. The English women are gentle and timid. The English men are hard and haughty. From whence does this apparent opposition stem? From the fact that the character of each Sex is thus heightened and that it is also the national character to carry everything to the extreme. Apart from this, everything is similar. The two Sexes like to live apart; both esteem the pleasures of the table; both gather to drink after the meal, the men wine, the women tea; both indulge in games without them being a rage and make a craft of it rather than a passion; both have a great respect for decent things; both love their fatherland and its laws; both honor conjugal fidelity, and, if they violate it, do not make it an honor to do so; domestic tranquillity pleases both; both are quiet and taciturn; they are both difficult to move; both violent in their passions; for both, love is terrible and tragic, it decides the fate of their days; nothing less is at stake, says Muralt[66] than losing reason or life in it. Finally, both enjoy themselves in the country, and English Ladies like to wander in their solitary parks as much as to go to show themselves off at Vauxhall. From this common taste for solitude arises a taste for the contemplative readings and the Novels with which England is inundated.* Thus both, withdrawn more into themselves, give themselves less to frivolous imitations, get more of a taste for the true pleasures of life, and think less of appearing happy than of being so.

I have made especial mention of the English because they are, of all the nations of the world, the one in which the morals of the two Sexes appear at first glance to be most contrary. From their relation in this country we can draw a conclusion about the others. The whole difference consists in the fact that the life of women is a continual development of their morals, whereas, since those of men disappear in the uniformity of business, one must wait to see them in their pleasures to judge of them. Do you want to know men? Study women. This maxim is general, and up to this point everybody will agree with me. But if I add that there are no good morals for women outside of a withdrawn and domestic life; if I say that the peaceful care of the family and the home are their lot, that the

* They are, like the men, sublime or detestable. In no language whatsoever has a Novel the equal of *Clarissa,*[67] or even approaching it, ever been written.

dignity of their Sex consists in modesty, that shame and chasteness[68] are inseparable from decency for them, that when they seek for men's looks they are already letting themselves be corrupted by them, and that any woman who shows herself off disgraces herself; I will be immediately attacked by this philosophy of a day which is born and dies in the corner of a big City and wishes to smother the cry of nature and the unanimous voice of humankind.

"Popular prejudices!" exclaim some. "Petty errors of childhood. Deceit of the laws and of education! Chasteness is nothing. It is only an invention of the social laws to protect the rights of Fathers and Husbands and to preserve some order in families. Why should we blush at the needs which nature has given us? Why should we find a motive for shame in an act so indifferent in itself and so beneficial in its effects as the one which leads to the perpetuation of the species? Since the desires are equal on both sides, why should their manifestations be different? Why should one of the Sexes deny itself more than the other in the penchants which are common to them both? Why should man have different laws on this point than the animals?"

Your whys, says the God, would never end.[69]

But it is not to man but to his author that they should be addressed. Is it not absurd that I should have to say why I am ashamed of a natural sentiment, if this shame is no less natural to me than the sentiment itself? I might as well ask myself why I have the sentiment. Is it for me to justify what nature has done? From this line of reasoning, those who do not see why man exists ought to deny that he exists.

I am afraid that these great scrutinizers of God's counsels have weighed his reasons a little lightly. I, who do not pretend to know these reasons, believe that I see some which have escaped them. Whatever they may say about it, the shame which veils the pleasures of love from the eyes of others is something. It is the safeguard that nature has given in common to the two Sexes for a time when they are in a state of weakness and forgetfulness of themselves which puts them at the mercy of the first comer; it is thus that it covers their sleep with the shadows of night, so that, during this time of darkness, they will be less exposed to one another's attacks. It is thus that it causes every sick animal to seek isolation and deserted places, so that it can suffer and die in peace, safe from the blows it can no longer fend off.

In relation to the chasteness of the fair Sex in particular, what gentler arm could this same nature have given to the one it destined to resist? The desires are equal. What does that mean? Are there on both sides the

same faculties for their satisfaction? What would become of the human species if the order of attack and defense were changed? The assailant would choose by chance times when victory would be impossible; the assailed would be left in peace when he needs to be vanquished, and pursued without interruption when he is too weak to succumb; in a word, since the power and the will, always in disaccord, would never permit the desires to be mutually shared, love would no longer be the support of nature but its destroyer and plague.

If the two Sexes had equally made and received the advances, vain importunity would have never been preserved; the passions, ever languishing in a boring freedom, would have never been excited; the sweetest of all the sentiments would hardly have touched the human heart, and its object would have been badly fulfilled. The apparent obstacle, which seems to keep this object at a distance, is in reality what brings it nearer. The desires, veiled by shame, become only the more seductive; in hindering them, chasteness inflames them. Its fears, its tricks, its reserves, its timid avowals, its tender and naive delicacy, say better what chasteness thinks to hide than passion could have said it without chasteness. It is chasteness which lends value to favors granted and sweetness to rejection. True love possesses really what chasteness alone contests with it; that mixture of weakness and modesty renders it more touching and tenderer; the less it obtains, the more the value of what it does obtain increases, and it is thus that it enjoys both its privations and its pleasures.

"Why," they ask, "should what is not shameful for a man be so for a woman? Why should one of the Sexes make a crime for itself out of what the other believes itself permitted?" As if the consequences were the same on both sides! As if all the austere duties of the woman were not derived from the single fact that a child ought to have a Father. Even if these important considerations were lacking to me, we would nevertheless still have the same response and it would still be without reply. Nature wanted it so, and it would be a crime to stifle its voice. The man can be audacious, such is his vocation;* someone has to declare. But every

* We must distinguish between this audacity, and insolence and brutality. For nothing issues from more opposed sentiments, nor does anything have more contrary effects. I suppose an innocent and free love, receiving its laws only from itself; it belongs to this love alone to preside at its mysteries and to form the union of persons as well as that of hearts. When a man insults the chasteness of woman and attacks with violence the charms of a young object which feels nothing for him, his coarseness is not the result of ardent passion; it is only scandalous outrage; it bespeaks a soul without morals, without refinement, incapable of either love or decency. The greatest value of the pleasures is in the heart of the one who grants them; a true lover would find only pain, anger, and despair in the very possession of the one he loves if he thought he were not loved in return.

To wish to satisfy his desires insolently, without the consent of the one who gave rise to them, is the audacity of a satyr; that of a man is to know how to give witness to them

woman without chasteness is guilty and depraved, because she tramples on a sentiment natural to her Sex.

How can one dispute the truth of this sentiment? If the whole earth did not give unmistakable witness to it, the simple comparison of the Sexes would suffice for recognizing it. Is it not nature which adorns young women with those features so sweet and which a little shame renders even more touching? Is it not nature which puts that timid and tender glance in their eyes which is resisted with such difficulty? Is it not nature which gives their complexion more lustre and their skin more delicacy so that a modest blush can be better perceived? Is it not nature which renders them apprehensive so that they flee, and feeble so that they succumb? To what end are they given a heart more sensitive to pity, in running less speed, a body less robust, a shorter stature, more delicate muscles, if nature had not destined them to let themselves be vanquished? Subjected to the indispositions of pregnancy and the pains of childbirth, should such an increase in labor exact a diminution of strength? But, to be reduced to this hard estate, they had to be strong enough to succumb only when they want to and feeble enough always to have a pretext for submitting. This is exactly the point at which nature has placed them.

Let us move from reasoning to experience. If chasteness were a prejudice of society and education, this sentiment ought to increase in places where more attention is paid to education and where the social laws are ceaselessly refined; it ought to be weaker wherever man has stayed closer to the primitive state. It is all to the contrary.* In our mountains, the women are timid and modest; a word makes them blush; they dare not raise their eyes to men, and keep silence before them. In the big cities, chasteness is ignoble and base. It is the only thing for which a well brought up woman would be ashamed. And the honor of having made a decent man blush belongs only to women of the best tone.

The argument drawn from the example of the beasts proves nothing

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without displeasing, to make them attractive, to act in such a way that they be shared, to enslave the sentiments before attacking the person. It is not yet enough to be loved; desires shared do not alone give the right to satisfy them; the consent of the will is also needed. The heart accords in vain what the will refuses. The decent man and the lover holds back even when he could obtain what he wishes. To win this silent consent is to make use of all the violence permitted in love. To read it in the eyes, to see it in the ways in spite of the mouth's denial, that is the art of he who knows how to love. If he then completes his happiness, he is not brutal, he is decent. He does not insult chasteness; he respects it; he serves it. He leaves it the honor of still defending what it would have perhaps abandoned.

*I expect the following objection: Savage women are not chaste, for they go naked? I answer that ours are even less so; for they are dressed. See the end of this essay on the subject of the Lacedaemonian maidens.

and is not true. Man is not a dog or a wolf. It is only necessary in his species to establish the first relations of society to give to his sentiments a morality unknown to beasts. The animals have heart and passions; but the holy image of the decent and the fair enters only the heart of man.

In spite of this, where was it learned that instinct never produces effects in animals similar to those that shame produces in men? I see proofs to the contrary every day. I see some animals hide themselves when satisfying certain needs, in order to keep a disagreeable object from the senses; I see them, instead of fleeing, eager to cover the vestiges afterwards. What is needed for these efforts to have an air of propriety and decency other than that they be taken by men? In their loves I see caprices, choices, and concerted refusals which come very close to following the maxim of exciting the passions by obstacles. At the very instant I write this, I have before my eyes an example which confirms it. Two young pigeons in the happy time of their first loves provide me with a picture very different from the stupid brutality ascribed to them by our supposed wise men. The white female goes following her beloved step by step and takes flight herself as soon as he turns around. Does he remain inactive? Light pecks with the bill wake him up; if he retires, he is pursued; if he protects himself, a little flight of six steps attracts him again. Nature's innocence arranges the provocations and the feeble resistance with an art which the most skillful coquette could hardly attain. No, the playful Galatea did not do better, and Virgil could have drawn one of his most charming images from a pigeon house.

Even if it could be denied that a special sentiment of chasteness was natural to women, would it be any the less true that in society their lot ought to be a domestic and retired life, and that they ought to be raised in principles appropriate to it? If the timidity, chasteness, and modesty which are proper to them are social inventions, it is in society's interest that women acquire these qualities; they must be cultivated in women, and any woman who disdains them offends good morals. Is there a sight in the world so touching, so respectable, as that of a Mother surrounded by her children, directing the work of her domestics, procuring a happy life for her husband and prudently governing the home? It is here that she shows herself in all the dignity of a decent woman; it is here that she really commands respect, and beauty shares with honor the homages rendered to virtue. A home whose mistress is absent is a body without a soul which soon falls into corruption; a woman outside of her home loses her greatest luster, and, despoiled of her real ornaments, she displays herself indecently. If she has a husband, what is she seeking among men? If she does not, how can she expose herself to putting off, by an immodest

bearing, he who might be tempted to become her husband? Whatever she may do, one feels that in public she is not in her place; and her very beauty, which pleases without attracting, is only one more fault for which the heart reproaches her. Whether this impression comes to us from nature or education, it is common to all the peoples of the world; everywhere, women are esteemed in proportion to their modesty; everywhere, there is the conviction that in neglecting the ways of their Sex they neglect its duties; everywhere, it is seen that, when they take on the masculine and firm assurance of the man and turn it into effrontery, they abase themselves by this odious imitation and dishonor both their sex and ours.

I know that in some countries contrary customs prevail. But look at the sort of morals to which they have given rise. I need no other example to confirm my maxims. Let us apply to the morals of women what I said above concerning the honor with which they are treated. Among all the ancient civilized peoples they led very retired lives; they appeared rarely in public; never with men, they did not go walking with them; they did not have the best places at the theater; they did not put themselves on display;* they were not even always permitted to go; and it is well known that there was a death penalty for those who dared to show themselves at the Olympic Games.

In the home, they had a private apartment where the men never entered. When their husbands entertained for dinner, they rarely presented themselves at the table; the decent women went out before the end of the meal, and the others never appeared at the beginning. There was no common place of assembly for the two Sexes; they did not pass the day together. This effort not to become sated with one another made their meetings more pleasant. It is certain that domestic peace was, in general, better established and that greater harmony prevailed between man and wife** than is the case today.

Such were the practices of the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, and even the Egyptians, in spite of Herodotus's bad jokes, which refute themselves.[71] If, on occasion, women stepped out of the bounds of this modesty, the public outcry showed that this was an exception. What has not been said about the liberty of the Fair Sex at Sparta? It can also be seen in the *Lysistrata* of Aristophanes how shocking the impudence of the Athen-

* In the Athenian theatre, the women occupied a high gallery called *Cercis*, neither convenient for seeing nor being seen; but it appears from the adventure of Valeria and Sulla[70] that at the Roman Circus they were mixed with the men.

** The cause could be attributed to the facility of divorce; but the Greeks made little use of it, and Rome existed five hundred years before anyone took advantage of the law which permitted it.

ian women was in the eyes of the Greeks; and, at Rome, already corrupted, with what scandal were the Roman Ladies viewed who presented themselves at the Tribunal of the Triumvirs.

Everything is changed. Since then, hordes of barbarians, dragging their women with them in their armies, have inundated Europe; the licentiousness of camps, combined with the natural coldness of the northern climates, which makes reserve less necessary, introduced another way of life which was encouraged by the books of chivalry, in which beautiful Ladies spent their lives in getting themselves honorably and decently kidnapped by men. Since these books were the schools of gallantry of the time, the libertine ideas that they inspire were introduced, especially at the Courts and in the big cities where people pride themselves rather more on their refinement; by the very progress of this refinement, it had to degenerate finally into coarseness. It is thus that the modesty natural to the Fair Sex has little by little disappeared and that the morals of sutlers have been transmitted to women of quality.

But, do you want to know how shocking these practices, contrary to natural ideas, are for those who have not the habit of them? You can judge from the surprise and distress of Foreigners and people from the Provinces at the sight of these ways so new for them. This distress constitutes a praise of the women of their country, and it is to be believed that those who cause it would be less proud of it if its source were better known to them. It is not that this impresses, but rather that it embarrasses, and that chasteness, banished by the woman from her speech and her bearing, takes refuge in the heart of the man.

To return now to our Actresses, I ask how an estate, the unique object of which is to show oneself off to the public and, what is worse, for money, could agree with decent women and be compatible with modesty and good morals: Is there even need to dispute about the moral differences between the Sexes to feel how unlikely it is that she who sets herself for sale in performance would not soon do the same in person and never let herself be tempted to satisfy desires that she takes so much effort to excite? What! In spite of countless timid precautions, a decent and prudent woman, exposed to the least danger, has nevertheless great difficulty in keeping a faithful heart; and these audacious young persons, with no education other than in a system of coquetterie and amorous roles, immodestly dressed,* constantly surrounded by ardent and daring youth, in the midst of the sweet voices of love and pleasure—these young persons, I say, will resist their age, their heart, the objects that surround

*What shall we say if we assume that they possess the beauty that is usually expected of them? See the *Entretien sur le Fils naturel.*[72]

them, the speeches addressed to them, the ever recurring opportunities, and the gold for which they are beforehand half sold! We would have to be believed to possess a childlike simplicity for someone to want to impose on us to this extent. Vice in vain hides itself in obscurity; its imprint is on the guilty faces. A woman's audacity is the sure sign of her shame; it is for having too much cause to blush that she blushes no more; and, if chasteness sometimes outlives purity, what must one think about purity when chasteness itself is extinguished?

Let us assume, if you wish, that there have been some exceptions; let us assume:

that there are as many as three whom one could name.[73]

I am prepared to believe what I have never seen nor heard said. But shall we call a profession decent in which a decent woman is a prodigy and which leads us to despise those who exercise it unless we count on a constant miracle? Immodesty conforms so well to their estate and they are so well aware of it themselves that there is not one who would not think herself ridiculous even in feigning to take for her own the discourses of prudence and honor that she retails to the public. For fear that these severe maxims might make a progress injurious to her interests, the actress is always the first to parody her role and destroy her own work. As soon as she reaches the wings, she divests herself of the morality of the theater as well as of her dignity; and if lessons of virtue are learned on the Stage, they are quickly forgotten in the dressing rooms.

After what I have just said, I believe I need not explain further how the dissoluteness of the actresses leads to that of the actors; especially in a profession which forces them to live in the greatest familiarity with each other. I need not show how, from an estate which dishonors, indecent sentiments arise, nor how the vices divide those whom common interest ought to unite. I shall not expand on the countless subjects for discord and quarrels which the distribution of roles, the division of the receipts, the choice of plays, and the jealousy over applause must constantly excite, principally among the actresses, not to speak of the intrigues of gallantry. It is even more useless that I set forth the effects that the association of luxury and misery, inevitable among this sort of person, must naturally produce. I have already said too much for you and for reasonable men; I could never say enough for the predisposed who do not want to see what reason shows them but only what accords with their passions or their prejudices.

If all this is bound up with the Actor's profession, what shall we do, Sir, to prevent its inevitable effects? As for me, I see only one way; it is to remove the cause. When the ills of a man come to him from his nature or a

certain way of life which he cannot change, do the doctors try to prevent them? To forbid an Actor to be vicious is to forbid the man to be sick.

Does it follow from this that we must despise all Actors? On the contrary, it follows that an actor who is modest, decent, and has morals is, as you have said so well, doubly estimable, since he shows thereby that his love of virtue wins out over the passions of men and the ascendency of his profession. The only fault that can be imputed to him is to have chosen it in the first place; but, too often, a youthful error decides life's destiny; and when a man feels a real talent in himself, can he resist its appeal? The great actors carry their excuse with them; it is the bad ones who ought to be despised.

If I have stayed so long with the terms of the general proposition, it is not that I would not have had even more advantage in applying it directly to the City of Geneva; but repugnance to putting my fellow citizens on the Stage has caused me to put off speaking of us as long as I could. However, I must come to it at last; and I would have fulfilled my task only imperfectly if I did not seek to establish what will result in our particular situation from the founding of a Theater in our City if your opinion and your reasons determine the government to tolerate one there. I shall limit myself to effects so evident that they could not be contested by anyone who knows a bit about our constitution.

Geneva is rich, it is true; but although those enormous disproportions of fortune, which impoverish a whole land to enrich a few inhabitants and sow misery around opulence, are not to be seen there, it is certain that, if some Genevans possess a rather large property, many live in relatively harsh poverty and that the easy circumstances of the majority come from hard work, economy, and moderation rather than positive wealth. There are many Cities poorer than our own in which the citizen can give much more to his pleasures because the land which feeds him is never worn out, and, since his time is of no value, he can waste it without loss. It is not so with us, who, without lands to subsist by, have only our industry. The people of Geneva supports itself only by dint of labor and has what is necessary only insofar as it denies itself every excess; this is one of the reasons for our sumptuary laws. It seems to me that what ought first to strike every foreigner coming to Geneva is the air of life and activity which prevails there. Everyone is busy, everyone is moving, everyone is about his work and his affairs. I do not believe that any other City so small in the world presents such a spectacle. Visit the St. Gervais Quarter. All the watchmaking of Europe seems centered there. Go through the Molard and the low streets; there, an organization for commerce on a large scale, stacks of boxes, barrels scattered at random, an

odor of the Orient and of spices, make you think you are in a seaport. At Paquis and Eaux-Vives the sight and sound of the printed calico and linen mills seems to transport you to Zurich. The city appears, as it were, multiplied by the labors which take place in it; and I have seen people who, at first glance, estimate the population at a hundred thousand souls. Its arms, its use of time, its vigilance, its austere parsimony, are the treasures of Geneva. This is with what we await an amusement of the idle which, in taking from us both time and money, will truly double our loss.

Geneva does not have twenty-four thousand souls, you will agree. I see that Lyons, much richer in proportion, and at least five or six times more populous, barely supports a theater and that, if this theater were an opera, the city would not be adequate to it. I see that Paris, the capital of France and the whirlpool which engulfs the wealth of this great Realm, supports three in what is at best a modest fashion, and a fourth at certain seasons of the year. Let us suppose that this fourth* were permanent. I see that with more than six hundred thousand inhabitants, this meeting place of opulence and idleness provides, all things considered, scarcely one thousand to twelve hundred Spectators daily. In the rest of the Realm, I see that Bordeaux, Rouen, large seaports, I see that Lille, Strasbourg, large military centers, full of idle officers who spend their lives waiting for noon and eight o'clock, have each a Dramatic theater; yet involuntary taxes are needed to support it. But how many other cities incomparably larger than ours, how many seats of both royal and autonomous Courts of Justice, cannot support a resident Theater?

In order to judge if we are in a position to do better, let us take a well-known point of comparison, such as, for example, Paris. I say, then, that, if more than six hundred thousand inhabitants provide, altogether, only twelve hundred Spectators daily for the Paris theaters, less than twenty-four thousand inhabitants will certainly not provide more than forty-eight at Geneva. Moreover, free tickets must be deducted from this number, and it must be supposed that there are not proportionally fewer unoccupied people at Geneva than at Paris, a supposition that seems to me indefensible.

Now, if the Actors of the French theater, pensioned by the King and proprietors of their own theater, have great difficulty in supporting themselves at Paris with an audience of three hundred spectators per perform-

* If I do not count the Concerts of Religious Music, it is because, rather than being a theatrical entertainment added to the others, they are only a supplement to them. I do not count the little Shows at the fair either; but I count the theater there for the whole year, while it only lasts six months. In investigating by comparison whether it is possible for a troop to exist in Geneva, I suppose, everywhere, relations more favorable to the affirmative than the known facts warrant.

ance,* I ask how the Actors of Geneva will support themselves with an audience of forty-eight spectators for their entire resource? You will tell me that life is cheaper in Geneva than in Paris. Yes, but the tickets will cost proportionately less; and then, board is nothing for Actors. It is costumes and jewelry which cost. All this must be sent for from Paris or maladroit workers must be trained. It is in places where all these things are common that they are most cheaply made. You will say that they will be subjected to our sumptuary laws. But we would wish in vain to bring reform to the theater; never will Cleopatra or Xerxes have a taste for our simplicity. Since the business of Actors is to appear, it is to deprive them of the taste for their craft to prevent them from appearing; and I doubt if ever a good actor would consent to becoming a Quaker. Finally, it can be objected that the Geneva troop, since it will be considerably less numerous than that of Paris, will be able to subsist at considerably less cost. Agreed; but will this difference be in the proportion of 48 to 300? Add that a more numerous company has also the advantage of being able to play more often, while in a little Company, which lacks understudies, not everyone can play every day; the illness or the absence of a single Actor causes a performance to be missed, and this means that much lost for the receipts.

The Genevans are excessively fond of the country; this can be judged by the number of homes scattered out around the City. The charm of the hunt and the beauty of the surroundings nourish this salutary taste. The gates, closed before nightfall, deprive one of the liberty of taking walks outside; and, since the country homes are so near, very few well-to-do people sleep in town during the summer. Each, having spent the day at his business, leaves at the closing of the gates in the evening and goes to his little retreat to breathe the purer air and enjoy the most charming countryside on earth. There are even many Citizens and Townsmen who reside there the whole year and have no dwelling in Geneva. All of this is so much lost to the Theater; and, during the entire season of good weather, almost the only ones remaining to support it will be people who never go. In Paris it is an entirely different thing; there one can combine the Theater and the country quite well; and, during the whole summer, you see nothing but carriages leaving the gates of the city at the hour when the Theater is over. As to the people who sleep in Town, the liberty of going out at any time tempts them less than the inconveniences which

*Those who only go to the theatre on nice days, when the audience is large, will find this estimate too low; but those who have followed it for ten years, as I have, good and bad days alike, will certainly find it too high.

If, then, we must reduce the daily number of three hundred at Paris, we must reduce that of forty-eight at Geneva, which strengthens my objections.

accompany it repel them. One gets bored so quickly with the public walks, one must go so far to find the country, its air is so infected with filth, and the prospect is so unattractive, that it is preferable to go and close oneself up in the Theater. Here is another difference to the disadvantage of our Actors, and a half of the year lost for them. Do you think, sir, that they will easily find in the remainder enough to fill up such a large void? As for me, I see no other remedy than that of changing the hour at which the gates are closed, of sacrificing our security to our pleasures and leaving a Fortress open nights,* in the midst of three Powers of which the furthest removed has to go only half a league to come up to our glacis.

This is not all; it is impossible that an establishment so contrary to our ancient maxims be generally applauded. How many generous Citizens will look on with indignation at this monument of luxury and softness being elevated on the ruins of our antique simplicity and threatening from afar the public liberty? Do you think that they will go to lend their authority to this innovation by their presence after having openly disapproved of it? Be certain that many go to the Theater in Paris without scruple who will never set foot in it in Geneva because the good of their Fatherland is dearer to them than their amusement. Where will the imprudent Mother be who will dare to take her daughter to this dangerous school? And how many respectable women will think that they are disgracing themselves in going? If in Paris some persons abstain from going to the theater, it is solely from Religious principle, which will surely be no less strong among us; and we will have more motives of morals, of virtue, and of patriotism which will restrain even those whom Religion would not.**

I have shown that it is absolutely impossible to support a Theater at Geneva with the sole participation of the spectators. One of two things is necessary then: either the rich must subscribe to support it, a heavy burden which they will surely not be disposed to bear for a long time; or

* I know that all our great fortifications are the most useless thing in the world, and that, even if we had enough troops to defend them, they would still be quite useless; for surely no one would come to besiege us. But, because we have no siege to fear, we ought no less to be on the lookout to guarantee ourselves against every surprise; nothing is so easy as to assemble troops in our neighborhood. We have learned the use that can be made of this only too well, and we ought to recognize that the rights that are least founded for those who are outside of a city turn out to be excellent when they are inside of it.[74]

** I do not mean by this that one can be virtuous without Religion; I held this erroneous opinion for a long time, but now I am only too disabused. But I mean that a Believer can sometimes, from motives of purely social virtue, abstain from certain actions, indifferent in themselves and which do not immediately involve the conscience, such as going to the theater in a place where it is not good to tolerate it.

the State must involve itself and support the theater at its own expense. But how will the state support the theater? If it be by cutting back on the necessary expenses, for which its modest revenue barely suffices, with what will these be provided? Or, for this important use, will it destine the sums which economy and the integrity of the administration sometimes permit to be put in reserve for the most pressing needs? Must we discharge our little garrison and guard our gates ourselves? Must we reduce the slender honoraria of our Magistrates, or shall we deprive ourselves for this purpose of every resource for the least unforeseen accident? Without these expedients, I see only one which is practicable; that is the way of taxes and assessments, which means to assemble our Citizens and Townsmen in general Council in the temple of St. Pierre and there solemnly to propose that a tax be accorded for the establishment of the Theater.[75] God forbid that I should believe our wise and worthy Magistrates capable of ever making such a proposal; and from your own article one can judge how it would be received.

If we had the misfortune of finding some expedient adequate to overcoming these difficulties, it would be so much the worse for us; for that could come to pass only by means of some secret vice which, in weakening us still more in our smallness, would sooner or later destroy us. Let us suppose, nevertheless, that a noble zeal for the theater accomplished a miracle of this order; let us suppose the Actors well established in Geneva, well controlled by our laws, the Drama flourishing and frequented. Finally, let us suppose that our City has attained the situation of which you speak, that is, with both theater and morals it would combine the advantages of both, advantages, moreover, which are, as far as I can see, hardly compatible, since the advantage of the theater, which is to supplement morals, is of no account where morals exist.

The first noticeable effect of this establishment will be, as I have already said, a revolution in our practices which will necessarily produce one in our morals. Will this revolution be good or bad? It is time to examine this.

There is no well-constituted State in which practices are not to be found which are linked to the form of government and which help to preserve it. The Clubs in London were institutions of this sort before they were so unseasonably ridiculed by the authors of the *Spectator;* to these clubs, thus become ridiculous, have succeeded the coffee houses and the houses of ill fame. I doubt if the English People has gained much in the exchange. Similar clubs are now established in Geneva under the name of *circles;* and I have reason, Sir, to judge from your Article that you did not observe without esteem the tone of good sense and judgment

which they cause to prevail there. This practice is old among us although its name is not. The clubs existed in my childhood under the name of *societies;* but their form was not so good nor so regular. The exercise of arms which brings us together every spring, the various prizes which are awarded during one part of the year, the military festivals which these prizes occasion, the taste for the hunt common to all the Genevans, bringing the men frequently together, gave them the occasion to form among themselves, dining societies, country outings and, finally, bonds of friendship. But these assemblies, having for their object only pleasures and joy, were pretty much always formed in taverns. Our civil discords, during which the necessity of affairs obliged us to meet more often and to deliberate coldly and calmly, caused these tumultuous societies to be changed into more decent associations. These associations took the name of *circles* and, from a very sad cause, issued very good effects.*

These *circles* are societies of twelve to fifteen persons who rent comfortable quarters which they provide with furniture and the necessary store at common expense. Every afternoon all the associates whose affairs or pleasures do not retain them elsewhere go to these quarters. They meet and there each gives himself without restraint to the amusements of his taste; they gamble, chat, read, drink and smoke. Sometimes they dine there, but rarely, because the Genevan is a steady sort and likes to live with his family. Also they often go walking together, and the amusements they provide for themselves are exercises fit to cause and maintain a robust body. The women and the girls, for their part, meet in societies at one another's homes. The object of this meeting is to provide the occasion for a little social card-playing, refreshments, and, as can be imagined, inexhaustible gossiping. The men, without being very severely excluded from these societies, are rather rarely involved in them; and I should think even worse of those who are always to be found there than of those who never are.

Such are the daily amusements of the Geneva townsmen. Not unendowed with pleasure and gaiety, these amusements have something simple and innocent which suits republican morals; but the moment there is Drama, goodby to the *circles,* goodby to the societies! This is the revolution I predicted; all of this necessarily decays, and if you object the example of London cited by me where the established theater did not prevent the clubs, I shall answer that there is, in relation to us, an extreme difference; it is that a theater, which is only a speck in that immense City, will be in ours a great object which will absorb everything.

*I shall speak hereafter of the disadvantages.

If you ask me next what is so bad about abolishing the *circles,* . . . No, Sir, that question will not come from a Philosopher; it is a woman's speech, or that of a young man who treats our *circles* as guardhouses and thinks he smells the odor of tobacco. I must nevertheless answer; for, this once, although I address myself to you, I write for the people, and doubtless it is clear that I do so; but you have forced me to it.

I say, in the first place, that, if the odor of tobacco is a bad thing, it is a very good one to remain the master of one's property and to be sure of sleeping at home. But I am already forgetting that I do not write for d'Alemberts. I must express myself in another way.

Let us follow the indications of nature, let us consult the good of Society; we shall find that the two sexes ought to come together sometimes and to live separated ordinarily. I said it before concerning women, I say it now concerning men. They are affected as much as, and more than, women by a commerce that is too intimate; they lose not only their morals, but we lose our morals and our constitution; for this weaker sex, not in the position to take on our way of life, which is too hard for it, forces us to take on its way, too soft for us; and, no longer wishing to tolerate separation, unable to make themselves into men, the women make us into women.

This disadvantageous result which degrades man is very important everywhere; but it is especially so in States like ours, whose interest it is to prevent it. Whether a Monarch governs men or women ought to be rather indifferent to him, provided that he be obeyed; but in a Republic, men are needed.*

The ancients spent almost their whole lives in the open air, either dispatching their business or taking care of the State's in the public place, or walking in the Country, in gardens, on the seashore, in the rain or under the sun, and almost always bareheaded.** In all of this, no women; but they were quite able to find them in case of need, and we do not find from their Writings and the samples of their conversation which are left

*I will be told that Kings need men for war. Not at all. Instead of thirty thousand men, they need, for example, only raise one hundred thousand women. Women do not lack courage; they prefer honor to life; when they fight, they fight well. The difficulty with their sex is its not being able to support the fatigues of war and the intemperance of the seasons. The secret is, hence, always to have triple the number which is necessary for fighting in order to sacrifice the other two-thirds to sickness and mortality.

Who would believe that this joke, the application of which can be seen easily enough, should have been taken literally in France by some intelligent people.[76]

**After the battle won by Cambyses over Psammenitus, the Egyptians, who always went bareheaded, were distinguished among the dead by the extreme hardness of their skulls, while the Persians, always wearing their big tiaras, had skulls so tender that they could be broken without effort. Herodotus himself bore witness to this difference a long time afterwards.[77]

to us that intelligence, taste, or even love, lost anything by this reserve. As for us, we have taken on entirely contrary ways; meanly devoted to the wills of the sex which we ought to protect and not serve, we have learned to despise it in obeying it, to insult it by our derisive attentions; and every women at Paris gathers in her apartment a harem of men more womanish than she, who know how to render all sorts of homage to beauty except that of the heart, which is her due. But observe these same men, always constrained in these voluntary prisons, get up, sit down, pace continually back and forth to the fireplace, to the window, pick up and set down a fan a hundred times, leaf through books, glance at pictures, turn and pirouette about the room, while the idol, stretched out motionlessly on her couch, has only her eyes and her tongue active. From where does this difference come if it is not that nature, which imposes this sedentary and homebound life on women, prescribes an entirely opposite one for men, and that this restlessness indicates a real need in them? If the Orientals, whose warm climate causes them to sweat a good deal, do little exercise and do not go walking at all, at least they go and sit in the open air and breath at their ease, while here the women take great pains to suffocate their friends in sound rooms well closed.

If the strength of the men of antiquity is compared to that of the men of today, no sort of equality can be found. Our gentlemen's exercises are children's games next to those of ancient Gymnastic; rackets (*la paume*) has been abandoned as too fatiguing, and we can no longer travel by horseback. I say nothing of our troops. The marches of the Greek and Roman armies can no longer be conceived. Just to read of the length of march, the work, and the burden of the Roman soldier is tiring and overwhelms the imagination. Horses were not permitted to the infantry Officers. Often the Generals made the same journeys on foot that their troops did. Never did the two Catos travel otherwise, either alone or with their armies. Otho himself, the effeminate Otho, marched in full armor at the head of his army in going to meet Vitellius. Let one fighting man be found today capable of doing as much. We are fallen in everything. Our Painters and Sculptors complain about not being able to find models comparable to those of antique art anymore. Why is that? Has man degenerated? Has the species a physical decrepitude just as does the individual? On the contrary; the northern barbarians, who have, so to speak, peopled Europe with a new race, were bigger and stronger than the Romans whom they vanquished and subjugated. We ought then to be stronger ourselves, we who for the most part are descended from these newcomers; but the first Romans lived like

men* and found in their constant exercises the vigor that nature had refused them, while we lose ours in the indolent and soft life to which our dependence on the Fair Sex reduces us. If the Barbarians of whom I have just spoken lived with women, they did not, for all that, live like them. It was they who had the courage to live like the men, just as the Spartan women did. The woman made herself robust, and the man was not enervated.

If this effort to oppose Nature is hurtful to the body, it is even more so to the mind. Imagine what can be the temper of the soul of a man who is uniquely occupied with the important business of amusing women, and who spends his entire life doing for them what they ought to do for us when, exhausted by labors of which they are incapable, our minds have need of relaxation. Given to these puerile habits, to what that is great could we ever raise ourselves? Our talents and our writings savor of our frivolous occupations;** agreeable if one wishes, but, small and cold like our sentiments, they have as their sole merit that easy and clever style which is not hard to give to nothings. These throngs of ephemeral works which come to light every day, made only to amuse women and having neither strength nor depth, fly from the dressing table to the counter.[79] This is the way to rewrite ever again the same things and to make them always new. Two or three will be cited which will serve as exceptions; but I will cite a hundred thousand which will confirm the rule. It is for this reason that most of the productions of our age will pass with it, and posterity will think that very few books were written in this Age which produced so many.

It would not be hard to show that instead of gaining by these practices, the women lose. They are flattered without being loved; they are served without being honored; they are surrounded by agreeable persons but they no longer have lovers; and the worst is that the former, without

*The Romans were the smallest and weakest men of all the peoples of Italy; and this difference was so great, says Livy, that it was noticeable at first glance in the troops of both. Nevertheless, exercise and discipline prevailed so much over nature that the weak did what the strong could not do and vanquished them.[78]

**Women, in general, do not like any art, know nothing about any, and have no Genius. They can succeed in little works which require only quick wit, taste, grace, and sometimes even a bit of philosophy and reasoning. They can acquire science, erudition, talents, and everything which is acquired by dint of work. But that celestial flame which warms and sets fire to the soul, that genius which consumes and devours, that burning eloquence, those sublime transports which carry their raptures to the depths of hearts, will always lack in the writings of women; their works are all cold and pretty as they are; they may contain as much wit as you please, never a soul; they are a hundred times more sensible than passionate. They do not know how to describe nor to feel even love. Only Sappho, as far as I know, and one other woman, deserve to be excepted. I would bet anything in the world that the *Lettres portugaises* were written by a man. Now, everywhere that women dominate their taste must also dominate; and this is what determines the taste of our Age.

having the sentiments of the latter, usurp nonetheless all the rights. The society of the two sexes, having become too usual and too easy, has produced these two effects, and it is thus that the general spirit of gallantry stifles both genius and love.

As for me, I find it hard to conceive how men can honor women so little as to dare to address these stale amorous speeches ceaselessly to them, these insulting and mocking compliments to which they do not even deign to give an air of good faith. When we insult women by these evident lies, does it not amount to declaring to them rather plainly that no obliging truth can be found to say to them? It happens only too often that love makes illusions for itself about the qualities of the one who is loved; but is there a question of love in all this tedious jargon? Do not all those who use it use it equally for all women? And would they not be vexed if they were thought to be seriously in love with a single one? Let them not be disquieted. It would require strange ideas of love to believe them capable of it, and nothing is so far removed from its tone than that of gallantry. In the way that I conceive of this terrible passion, its perplexity, its frenzies, its palpitations, its transports, its burning expressions, its even more energetic silence, its inexpressible looks which their timidity renders reckless and which give evidence of desires through fear, it seems to me that, after a language so vehement, if the lover only once brought himself to say, "I love you," the beloved, outraged, would say to him, "you do not love me anymore," and would never see him again in her life.

Our *circles* still preserve some image of ancient morals among us. By themselves, the men, exempted from having to lower their ideas to the range of women and to clothe reason in gallantry, can devote themselves to grave and serious discourse without fear of ridicule. They dare to speak of fatherland and virtue without passing for windbags; they even dare to be Themselves without being enslaved to the maxims of a Magpie. If the turn of conversation becomes less polished, reasons take on more weight; they are not satisfied by jokes or compliments. They cannot get away with fine phrases for answers. They do not humor one another in dispute; each, feeling himself attacked by all the forces of his adversary, is obliged to use all his own to defend himself; it is thus that the mind gains precision and vigor. If some licentious remarks are mixed in with all this, one ought not to take umbrage at it. The least vulgar are not always the most decent, and this language, a bit rustic, is still preferable to the more studied style with which the two sexes mutually seduce one another and familiarize themselves in all propriety with vice. The way of life that is more in conformity with the inclinations of man is also better suited to his temperament. He does not remain settled in a chair for the whole day.

He applies himself to games which give exercise, he comes and goes; many *circles* are held in the country, others go there. There are gardens for walking, spacious courts for exercise, a big lake for swimming, the whole country is open for the hunt. And it must not be thought that this hunt is conducted so comfortably as in the environs of Paris, where game is to be found underfoot and where one can shoot on horseback. In a word, these decent and innocent institutions combine everything which can contribute to making friends, citizens, and soldiers out of the same men, and, in consequence, everything which is most appropriate to a free people.

The societies of women are blamed for one failing; they make the women scandalmongers and satirists; and, indeed, one can easily understand that the anecdotes of a little city do not escape these feminine meetings; it can also be believed that the absent husbands are hardly spared; and no pretty and sought-after woman has an easy time of it in her neighbor's *circle.* But perhaps there is more good than bad in this failing, and it is, in any event, incontestably less harmful than those whose place it takes; for which is better, that a woman speak ill of her husband with her friends or that she do it with a man in private conversation, that she criticize the disorder of her neighbor or that she imitate it? Although the Genevans tell rather easily what they know and sometimes what they conjecture, they are really disgusted by calumny, and they will never be heard to make accusations against another that they believe to be false; while in other countries, the women, guilty equally by their silence and by their speech, hide, for fear of reprisals, the ill which they know, and publish for vengeance what they have invented.

How many public scandals are prevented for fear of these severe observers? They almost perform the function of Censors in our City. It is thus that in the great days of Rome, the Citizens, watching one another, publicly accused one another out of zeal for justice; but when Rome was corrupted and there was nothing left to do for good morals other than to hide the bad ones, the hatred of vices which unmasks them became one itself. The infamous informers succeeded zealous citizens; and, whereas formerly the good accused the vicious, they were accused in their turn. Thank heaven we are far from so terrible an end. We are not reduced to hiding from our own eyes for fear of disgusting ourselves. As for me, I will not have a better opinion of women when they are more circumspect. Women will humor one another more when there are more reasons for doing so and when each will need for herself the discretion the example of which she will set for others.

So then, we need not be much disturbed by the cackle of the women's societies. Let them speak ill of others so much as they like, provided they

do so among themselves. Really corrupt women could not long endure this way of life; and, however dear gossip may be to them, they would want to gossip with men. No matter what people have said to me about them, I have never seen any of these societies without a secret sentiment of esteem and respect for those who compose them. Such is, I said to myself, the plan of nature, which gives different tastes to the two Sexes, so that they live apart and each in his way.* Thus, these agreeable persons spend all their days devoted to occupations which are suitable for them or to innocent and simple amusements, quite apt to move a decent heart and to give a good opinion of them. I do not know what they said but they lived together; they may have spoken of men but they did without them; and, although they criticized the conduct of others so severely, at least their own was irreproachable.

The *circles* of men doubtlessly also have their disadvantages; what that is human does not? They gamble, they drink, they get drunk, they spend the whole night; all this may be true, all this may be exaggerated. There is everywhere a mixture of good and evil, but in different degrees. Everything is abused, a trivial axiom on the basis of which one ought neither to reject everything nor to accept everything. The rule for choosing is simple. When the good surpasses the evil, the thing ought to be accepted in spite of its disadvantages; when the evil surpasses the good, it must be rejected even with its advantages. When the thing is good in itself and bad only in its abuses, when the abuses can be provided against without much effort or tolerated without great harm, they can serve as the pretext, but not as the reason, for abolishing a useful practice; but what is bad in itself will always be bad,** whatever may be done to make good use of it. Such is the essential difference between the *circles* and the Theater.

The Citizens of the same State, the inhabitants of the same City, are not Anchorites; they could not always live alone and separated; if they could, it would not be necessary to constrain them to it. It is only the fiercest despotism which is alarmed at the sight of seven or eight men assembled, ever fearing that their conversation turns on their miseries.

Now, of all the kinds of relations which can bring individuals together in a city like our own, the *circles* form incontestably the most reasonable,

*This principle, on which all good morals depend, is developed in a clearer and more extended way in a manuscript which I am now holding and which I propose to publish, if enough time remains for that, although this announcement is hardly fit for winning in advance the favor of Ladies.

It will be easily understood that the manuscript about which I spoke in this note was the *Nouvelle Héloise,* which appeared two years after this work.[80]

**I speak of the moral order: for in the physical order there is nothing absolutely bad. The whole is good.

the most decent, and the least dangerous ones, because they neither wish nor are able to be hidden, because they are public and permitted, because order and rule prevail in them. It is even easy to demonstrate that the abuses which might result from them would arise equally in all of the others or that they would produce even greater ones. Before thinking of destroying an established practice, those that will be introduced in its place ought to have been carefully weighed. Whoever can propose one which is feasible and from which no abuse will result, let him propose it, and after that the *circles* can be abolished; well and good. Meanwhile, let us, if need be, permit men to spend the night drinking who, without that, might spend it doing worse.

All intemperance is vicious, and especially the one which deprives us of the noblest of our faculties. The excess of wine degrades man, at the least alienates his reason for a time, and in the long run, brutalizes it. But, after all, the taste for wine is not a crime and rarely causes one to be committed; it makes man stupid, not evil.* For every fleeting quarrel that it causes, it forms a hundred durable attachments. Speaking generally, drinkers are cordial and frank; they are almost all good, upright, just, faithful, brave, and decent men except for their single failing. Would one dare to say as much for the vices that are substituted for this one? Or can one pretend to make out of a whole city a race of men without failing, and self-controlled in everything? How many apparent virtues often hide real vices! The wise man is sober by temperance, the cheat out of hypocrisy. In the countries of bad morals, intrigues, treason, and adultery, men are apprehensive about an indiscreet state in which the heart is revealed while we are not on our guard. Everywhere, the people who most abhor drunkenness are those for whom it is most important to protect themselves from it. In Switzerland it is almost esteemed, in Naples it is detested. But, in the final accounting, which is more to be feared, the intemperance of the Swiss or the reserve of the Italian?

I repeat, it would be better to be sober and true, not only for oneself but even for Society; for everything which is bad in morality is also bad in politics. But the preacher stops at personal evil, the magistrate sees only the public consequences; the former has as his object only man's perfection, to which man never attains; the latter, only the good of the State insofar as it can be attained; thus all that is right to blame from the pulpit

*Let us not calumniate the vice; is this not sufficiently achieved by its ugliness? Wine does not make wickedness, it only discloses wickedness. He who killed Clitus in drunkenness, slew Philotas in cold blood. If drunkenness has its furies, what passion does not? The difference is that the others subsist deep in the soul, while this one takes fire and is extinguished instantaneously. Apart from this outburst, which passes and can easily be avoided we can be sure that whoever does evil deeds in wine is hatching evil plots when sober.

ought not to be punished by the laws. Never has a people perished from an excess of wine; all perish from the disorder of women. The reason for this difference is clear; the first of these two vices turns one away from the others; the second engenders them all. The diversity of ages has something to do with it too. Wine tempts youth less and drags it down less easily; hot blood gives it other desires; in the age of passions all are inflamed by the fire of a single one, reason is perverted at its birth, and man, still untamed, becomes undisciplinable before having borne the yoke of the laws. But let half-chilled blood seek a support which reanimates it, let a beneficent liquor take the place of the spirits that it has no more;* When an old man abuses this sweet remedy, he has already fulfilled his duties to his Fatherland; he deprives it only of the refuse of his years. He is at fault no doubt; he ceases to be a citizen before his death. But the other has not even begun being one; he makes himself, rather, into a public enemy by the seduction of his accomplices, by the example of the effect of his corrupted morals and, above all, by the pernicious moral principles he cannot fail to disseminate in order to authorize his deeds. It would have been better had he never existed.

From the passion for gambling arises a more dangerous abuse, but one that can be easily provided against or repressed. This is an affair for the police, the inspection of which is easier and more becoming in the *circles* than in private homes. Opinion can do much on this point; and as soon as the games that involve exercise and skill are made honorable, cards, dice, and games of chance will inevitably fall in decay. I do not even believe, whatever may be said, that these idle and delusive means of filling one's purse ever gain much credit with a reasonable and hard-working people, which knows too well the value of time and money to like losing them together.

Let us then preserve the *circles*, even with their faults. For these faults are not in the *circles* but in the men who compose them; and there is no imaginable form of social life in which the same faults do not produce more harmful effects. Again, let us not seek for the chimera of perfection but for the best possible according to the nature of man and the constitution of Society. There are some Peoples to whom I would say, destroy your circles and clubs, remove every barrier of propriety between the two sexes; ascend again, if it is possible, to the point of being only corrupt. But you, Genevans, avoid becoming corrupt if there is still time. Beware of the first step which is never the last one, and consider that it is easier to keep good morals than to put an end to bad ones.

* Plato, in his *Laws*, permits the use of wine only to the old men, and he sometimes even permits them its excess.

Only two years of Theater and everything will be overturned. They could not possibly divide themselves among so many amusements; the hour of the theater, being that of the *circles,* will cause them to dissolve; too many of the members will break away; those who remain will not be assiduous enough to be a great resource to one another nor to allow the associations to subsist for long. The two sexes meeting daily in the same place; the groups which will be formed for going there; the ways of life that they will see depicted in the theater, which they will be eager to imitate; the exposition of the Ladies and the Maidens all tricked out in their very best and put on display in the boxes as though they were in the window of a shop waiting for buyers; the affluence of the handsome young who will come to show themselves off, for their part, and who will soon find it much nicer to caper in the Theater than to exercise on the Plain-Palais; the little suppers with women which will be arranged on leaving, even if they are only with the actresses; finally, the contempt for the old practices which will result from the adoption of the new ones, all of this will soon put the agreeable life of Paris and the fine airs of France in the place of our old simplicity; and I rather doubt that Parisians in Geneva will long preserve the taste for our government.

One must not dissemble; the intentions are still upright, but the morals already noticeably incline toward decadence, and we follow, at a distance, in the tracks of those same Peoples whose fate does not fail to cause us anxiety. For example, I am told that the education of the young is generally much better than it was formerly; however, this can be proved only by showing that it makes better citizens. It is certain that the children know how to bow better, that they know how to offer their hand more gallantly to Ladies and to say an infinity of charming things to them for which I would have them beaten, that they know how to make decisions, settle things, interrupt grown men, and pester everybody without modesty or discretion. I am told that this trains them; I agree that this trains them to be impertinent and that this is, of all the things they learn by this method, the only one they do not forget. This is not all. In order to restrain them with the women whom they are destined to divert, care is taken to raise the children exactly like the women; they are protected from the sun, the wind, the rain, and the dust so that they will never be able to bear any of them. Since it is impossible to keep them from all contact with air, things are at least arranged so that it only gets to them after having lost half of its energy. They are deprived of all exercise, they are relieved of all their faculties, and they are rendered inept for any other activities than those to which they are destined; the only thing which the women do not exact from these vile slaves is that they conse-

crate themselves to their service in the Oriental fashion. With this difference, all that distinguishes them from the women is that, since nature has refused them women's graces, they substitute for them ridiculousness. On my last trip to Geneva, I already saw several of these young ladies in jerkins, with white teeth, plump hands, piping voices, and pretty green parasols in their hands, rather maladroitly counterfeiting men.

Men were coarser in my time. The children, rustically raised, had no complexion to preserve and did not fear the injuries of the air to which they had been accustomed from an early date. The Fathers took the children with them on the hunt, in the country, to all their exercises, in every Society. Timid and modest before aged people, they were hardy, proud, and quarrelsome among themselves. They had no hairdo to preserve; they challenged one another at wrestling, running, and boxing. They fought in good earnest, hurt one another sometimes, and then embraced in their tears. They went home sweating, out of breath, and with their clothes torn; they were real scamps, but these scamps made men who have zeal for the service of the fatherland in their hearts and blood to spill for it. Please God that as much can be said one day for our fine little spruced-up Gentlemen and that these men of fifteen will not be children of thirty.

Happily they are not all like this. The greater number still retain that old ruggedness which preserves a good constitution as well as good morals. Even those whom an over-delicate education softens for a time will be constrained, when they are grown up, to bend themselves to the habits of their compatriots. The latter will lose their roughness in the commerce of the world; the former will gain strength in exercise; all will become, I hope, what their ancestors were, or, at least, what their fathers are today. But let us not flatter ourselves that we shall preserve our liberty in renouncing the morals which acquired it.

I return to our actors, and, still supposing that they have a success which seems to me impossible, I find that this success will attack our constitution, not only in an indirect way, in attacking our morals, but directly in disturbing the equilibrium which ought to prevail among the various parts of the State in order to preserve the whole body in good health.

From the many reasons that I could give, I shall content myself with choosing one which is most suitable for the greatest number, because it limits itself to considerations of self-interest and money, always more palpable to the vulgar than moral effects, of which they are unable to see either the connections with their causes, or their influence on the destiny of the State.

The theater might be considered, if it succeeds, as a sort of tax which,

although voluntary, is nonetheless onerous for the People in that it provides a continual occasion for expenditure which it cannot resist. This tax is a bad one, not only because none of it comes back to the sovereign, but especially because its distribution, far from being proportional, burdens the poor beyond their strength and relieves the rich in taking the place of the more costly amusements which they would provide for themselves for want of this one. To agree to this, one need only observe that the differences in the prices of the seats are not, nor can they be, in proportion to those of the fortunes of the people who fill them. At the *Comédie-Française,* the first boxes and the places on the stage are four francs ordinarily, and six on the days of special prices; the pit costs twenty sous; there have even been repeated attempts to increase it. Now, no one will say that the wealth of the richest who go to the theater is only quadruple that of the poorest who sit in the pit. Speaking generally, the former are of an excessive opulence and most of the others have nothing.* It is with this as with the taxes on wheat, wine, salt, and everything necessary to life which have an appearance of justice at first glance and are at bottom very iniquitous; for the poor, who can only spend for necessities, are forced to throw away three quarters of what they spend in taxes, whereas, since the same necessities are only the least part of the expenditure of the rich, the tax is practically unnoticeable to them.** In this way, he who has little pays much, and he who has much pays little; I do not see what great justice can be found in that.

I will be asked who forces the poor to go to the theater. I answer: first, those who establish it and give them the temptation. In the second place, their very poverty, which condemns them to constant labor without hope of seeing it end, makes some relaxation necessary for the poor in order to bear it. They do not consider themselves unhappy because they work without respite when everybody else does the same; but is it not cruel to the one who works to be deprived of the recreations of the idle? He

*Even if the difference in the prices of the seats were increased in proportion to those of the fortunes, the equilibrium would not be re-established as a result of that. These inferior seats, priced too low, would be abandoned to the populace; and everyone would always spend beyond his means to occupy more honorable ones. This is an observation that can be made at the Shows in the fair. The reason for this disorder is that the first rows are then a fixed limit which the others can always approach without its being able to be moved farther away. The poor constantly tend to raise themselves above their twenty sous; but the rich, to flee them, have no asylum beyond their four francs; they must, in spite of themselves, let themselves be accosted and, if their pride suffers from it, their purse profits.

**This is why those, whom Bodin calls imposters,[81] and other public rascals, always establish their monopolies on the things necessary to life in order to starve the people gently without the rich grumbling. If the least object of luxury or ostentation were attacked, everything would be lost; but, provided the Great are content, what difference does it make whether the people live?

shares them then; and this very amusement which provides a means of economy for the rich, doubly weakens the poor, either by a real increase in expenses or by less zeal for work, as I have explained it above.

From these new reflections, it follows evidently, I believe, that the modern theater, which can only be attended for money, tends everywhere to promote and increase the inequality of fortunes, less noticeably, it is true, in the capitals than in a little City like our own. If I grant that this inequality, carried to a certain point, can have its advantages, you will certainly also grant that it ought to have limits, above all in a little State, above all in a Republic. In a Monarchy, where all the orders are intermediate between the Prince and the People, it can be a matter of some indifference that certain men pass from one to the other; for since others replace them, this change does not interrupt the progression. But in a Democracy in which the subjects and the sovereign are only the same men considered in different relations, as soon as the smaller number wins out in riches over the greater number, the State must perish or change its form. Whether the rich become richer or the poor more indigent, the difference of fortunes is no less increased in one way than the other; and this difference, carried beyond its measure, is what destroys the equilibrium about which I have spoken.

Never in a Monarchy can the opulence of an individual put him above the Prince; but, in a Republic, it can easily put him above the laws. Then the government no longer has force, and the rich are always the true sovereign. On the basis of these incontestable maxims, it remains to be considered whether inequality has not reached among us the last limit to which it can go without shaking the Republic. I refer myself on this point to those who know our constitution and the division of our riches better than I do. What I do know is that, since time by itself gives to the order of things a natural inclination toward this inequality and a successive progress in it up to its last limit, it is a great imprudence to accelerate it even more by establishments which promote it. The great Sully, who loved us, would certainly have been able to tell us: Theaters and Drama in any little Republic, and especially in Geneva, weaken the State.

If the establishment of the theater is in itself so harmful to us, what fruit will we cull from the plays which are performed in it? The very advantages which they might procure for the Peoples for whom they were composed will turn to our prejudice, in giving us for instruction what was given to them for censure, or, at least, in directing our tastes and our inclinations toward the things in the world which suit us the least. Tragedy will represent Tyrants and Heroes for us. What have we to do with them? Are we made to have them or to become ones ourselves?

It will give us a vain admiration for power and greatness. To what end will it serve us? Will we be greater or more powerful for it? Of what import is it for us to go and study the duties of Kings on the stage while neglecting to fulfil our own? Will the sterile admiration for the virtues of the theater compensate us for the simple and modest virtues which make the good citizen? Instead of curing us of our own ridiculousness, the Comedy will bring us that of others; it will persuade us that we are wrong to despise vices that are so much esteemed elsewhere. However foolish a Marquess may be, he is still a Marquess. Imagine what a resonance this title has in a country happy enough not to have any; and who knows how many shop drudges will think they are putting themselves in fashion by imitating the Marquesses of the last Century? I shall not repeat what I have already said of good faith always mocked and of the constant example of crimes made into jokes. What lessons for a People all of whose sentiments still have their natural rectitude, who believe that a rascal is always contemptible and that a good man cannot be ridiculous. What! Plato banished Homer from his Republic and we will tolerate Molière in ours! What worse could happen to us than to resemble the people he depicts, even those whom he makes us like.

I have said enough, I think, about them; and I think very little better of Racine's Heroes, of those Heroes all gotten up, so mawkish, so tender, who, with an air of courage and virtue, provide us only with the models for the young men of whom I have spoken, given over to gallantry, softness, love, to everything which can effeminate man and mitigate his taste for his real duties. The whole French Theater breathes only tenderness; it is the great virtue to which all the others are sacrificed, or, at least, the one which is made dearest to the Spectators. I do not say that this is wrong insofar as the poet's object is concerned; I know that the man without passions is a chimaera, that the appeal of the theater is founded only on the passions, that the heart is not attracted by those which are foreign to it nor by those which we do not like to see in others although we may be subject to them ourselves. The love of humanity and of the fatherland are the sentiments the depiction of which most touches those who are imbued with them, but when these two passions are extinguished, there remains only love, properly so called, to take their place, because its charm is more natural and is more difficult to erase from the heart than that of all the others. However, it is not equally suitable to all men; it is rather as a supplement to good sentiments than as a good sentiment itself that it can be admitted; not that it is not laudable in itself, like every well-regulated passion, but because its excesses are dangerous and inevitable.

The most wicked of men is he who isolates himself the most, who most

concentrates his heart in himself; the best is he who shares his affections equally with all his kind. It is much better to love a mistress than to love oneself alone in all the world. But whoever tenderly loves his parents, his friends, his fatherland, and humankind, degrades himself by a dissolute attachment which soon does damage to all the others and is without fail preferred to them. On this principle, I say that there are countries where the morals are so bad that they would be only too happy to be able to raise themselves back up to the level of love, and there are others where it would be unfortunate to descend to it, and I dare to think mine is in the latter case. I will add that to show us objects which deeply involve the passions is more dangerous than to anyone else because we have naturally only too much of a penchant to like them. Under a phlegmatic and cold manner the Genevans hide an ardent and sensitive soul easier to move than to control. In this abode of reason, beauty is not foreign nor without empire; the leaven of melancholy often causes love to ferment there; the men are only too capable of feeling violent passions, the women of inspiring them; and the sad effects that they have sometimes produced show how great is the danger of exciting them by touching and tender dramas. If the Heroes of some plays subject love to duty, in admiring their force, the heart lends itself to their weakness; less is learned in giving oneself to their courage than in putting oneself in the position of having need for it. It is more exercise for virtue; but he who dares to expose his virtue to these combats deserves to succumb in them. Love, love itself, takes on the mask of virtue in order to surprise it; love clothes itself with the enthusiasm of virtue; it usurps its force; it affects its language, and, when the error is perceived, it is far too late to recover! How many men of talent, seduced by these appearances, from the tender and generous lovers that they were at first, have become by degrees vile corruptors without morals, without respect for conjugal faith, without consideration for the rights of confidence and of friendship! Happy is he who is able to realize that he is on the brink of a precipice and to prevent himself from falling in! Is it in the midst of a rapid descent that one can hope to stop oneself? Is it in being moved to tenderness every day that the surmounting of tenderness can be learned? A weak penchant can easily be triumphed over; but he who knew true love and was able to vanquish it, oh! let us pardon this mortal, if he exists, for daring to pretend to virtue.

Thus, in whatever way things are envisaged, the same truth strikes us always. All that in the theatrical plays might be useful for those for whom they were written, will become detrimental for us, including even the taste which we will think we have acquired from them, which will only be a false taste without tact and delicacy, unseasonably substituted for the

solidity of reason. Taste is connected with many things; the refined forms of imitation to be seen in the theater, the comparisons to which they give occasion, reflections on the art of pleasing the spectators can cause it to germinate but do not suffice for its development. There is need of big cities, fine arts and luxury, an intimate commerce among the citizens, a strict dependence of them on one another, gallantry and even debauch, vices which one is forced to embellish; there is need, I say, of all this to cause a search for agreeable forms in everything and success in finding them. Some of these things will always be lacking to us, and we ought to tremble at acquiring the others.

We will have Actors, but of what sort? Will a good troop come right off to establish itself in a City of twenty-four thousand souls? We will, then, at first have bad actors, and we will at first be bad judges. Will they form us or will we form them? We will have good plays; but, taking them for such on somebody else's word, we will be exempted from having to examine them and will gain no more in seeing them played than in reading them. For all that, we will no less play the connoisseurs and arbiters of the theater; we will no less want to decide for our money and will be only the more ridiculous for it. It is not ridiculous to lack taste when one despises it; but it is ridiculous to pride oneself on it and only have bad taste. And, after all, what is this taste that is so much vaunted? The art of being knowing about petty things. In truth, when taste is good enough to preserve only liberty, all the rest is quite childish.

I see only one remedy for so many disadvantages; it is, in order to make the Dramas of our theater suitable to us, to compose them ourselves; we should have authors before we have Actors. For it is not good that we be shown all sorts of imitations, but only those of things that are decent and befitting free men.* It is certain that plays, drawn, like those of the Greeks, from the past misfortunes of the fatherland or the present failing of the people could offer useful lessons to the spectators. Who then will be the Heroes of our tragedies? Bertheliers? Lévrerys? Ah, worthy Citizens, you were, doubtless, Heroes but your obscurity abases you, your common names dishonor your great souls,** and we are no longer

* *Si quis ergo in nostram urbem venerit, qui animi sapientia in omnes possit sese vertere formas, et omnia imitari, volueritque poemata sua ostentare, venerabimur quidem ipsum, ut sacrum, admirabilem, et jucundum: dicemus autem non esse eiusmodi hominem in republica nostra, neque fas esse ut insit; mittemusque in aliam urbem, unguento caput eius perungentes, lanaque coronantes. Nos autem austeriori minusque jucundo utemur Poeta, fabularumque fictore, utilitatis gratia, qui decori nobis rationem exprimat, et quae dici debent dicat in his formulis quas a principio pro legibus tulimus, quando cives erudire agressi sumus* (Plat. de. Republ. lib. III.)[82]

** Philibert Berthelier was the Cato of our fatherland, with the difference that public liberty ended with the latter and began with the former. He was holding a tame Weasel when he was arrested; he handed over his sword with that pride which sits so well with

great enough ourselves to be able to admire you. Who will be our tyrants? Gentlemen of the Spoon,* bishops of Geneva, the counts of Savoy, the ancestors of a house with which we have just treated and to which we owe respect? Fifty years ago I could not have answered that the Devil** and the Antichrist would not also have had their roles. With the Greeks, a people otherwise quite jocular, everything was grave and serious as soon as their fatherland was involved; but, in this witty age when nothing escapes ridicule besides power, one dares to speak of Heroism only in big states although it is only to be found in small ones.

As to Comedy, it ought not to be dreamed of for us. It would cause the most frightful disorders among us; it would serve as an instrument for factions, parties, and private vengeances. Our city is so small that the most general depictions of morals would soon degenerate into satires and representations of persons. The example of ancient Athens, a city incomparably more populous than Geneva, presents us with a striking lesson; it was in the theater that the exile of many great men and the death of Socrates was prepared for; it was by the violence of the theater that Athens was lost, and its disasters justified only too well the chagrin to which Solon gave witness at the first performances of Thespis. What is quite certain for us is that it will be an ill omen for the Republic when we see the Citizens, disguised as wits, setting themselves to composing French verses and theatrical plays, talents which are not ours and which we will never possess. But let M. de Voltaire deign to compose tragedies for us on the model of *la Mort de César* and the first act of *Brutus;* and, if we

unfortunate virtue; then he continued to play with his Weasel without deigning to answer to the insults of his guards. He died as a martyr of liberty ought to die.

Jean Lévrery was Berthelier's Favonius, not in childishly imitating his speeches and his ways, but in dying voluntarily as he did, knowing that the example of his death would be more useful to his country than his life. Before going to the scaffold he wrote this epitaph, which had been made for his predecessor, on the wall of his prison:

Quid mihi mors nocuit? Virtus post fata virescit;
Nec cruce, nec saevi gladio perit illa Tyranni.[83]

* This was a brotherhood of Gentlemen from Savoy who had made a vow of brigandage against the city of Geneva and who, as the mark of their association, wore a spoon hung around their necks.

** I read, when I was young, a Tragedy, which was part of the Escalade,[84] in which the Devil was actually one of the Actors. I have been told that when this play was once performed, this character, as he came on stage, appeared double, as if the original had been jealous that they had had the audacity to imitate him, and instantly everybody, seized by fright, took flight, thus ending the performance. This tale is burlesque and will appear much more so in Paris than in Geneva; however, whatever suppositions we may indulge in, in this double apparition will be found a theatrical effect and a really terrifying one. I can imagine only one Sight simpler and more terrible yet, that is the hand emerging from the wall and writing unknown words at the feast of Balthazar.[85] The very idea makes one shudder. It seems to me that our lyric Poets are far from these sublime inventions; to no avail they make a great fuss with scenery for the purpose of horrifying. Even on the stage, not everything should be said to the eyes, but the imagination must also be excited.

must absolutely have a theater, let him engage himself always to fill it with his genius and to live as long as his plays.

I would be of the opinion that all of these reflections should be weighed maturely before taking into consideration the taste for adornment and dissipation which the example of the Actors must produce in our youth; but finally this example will have its effect too, and if, in general, the laws are everywhere insufficient to repress the vices which arise out of the nature of things, as I believe I have shown, how much more will they be so in our city where the first sign of their weakness will be the establishment of the Actors? For it will not be, strictly speaking, they who will have introduced this taste for dissipation; on the contrary, this taste will have preceded them, will have introduced them, and they will only fortify a penchant already all formed which, having caused them to be admitted, will so much the more cause them to be maintained with their faults.

I base myself throughout on the supposition that they will subsist comfortably in such a little City. And I say that, if we honor them as you claim we will, in a country where all are pretty nearly equal, they will be the equals of everybody, and will have in addition the public favor which naturally belongs to them. They will not, as elsewhere, be kept respectful by the Great whose benevolence they cultivate and the loss of whose grace they fear. The Magistrates will command their respect; granted. But these Magistrates will have been private men; they might have been friendly with the actors; they will have children who will still be friendly with them, and wives who love pleasure. All these connections will be means of indulgence and protection which it will be impossible always to resist. Soon the Actors, sure of impunity, will procure it also for their imitators; it is with them that disorder will have begun, but one cannot see where it can be ended. The women, the young, the rich, the idle, all will be for them, everything will help them evade the Laws which get in their way, everything will promote their licence; each, in seeking to satisfy them, will think he is working for his own pleasures. What man will dare to oppose this torrent if it is not perhaps some rigid old Pastor who will not be listened to and whose sense and gravity will pass for pedantry with a thoughtless youth? Finally, if they join a bit of art and intrigue to their success, I do not give the State thirty years before they are its arbiters.* The candidates for office will be seen intriguing for their favor

* It must always be remembered that, in order for the Drama to support itself at Geneva, this taste must become a rage; if it were only moderate, the drama would have to fail. Reason insists then that, in examining the effects of the theater, they be measured in relation to a cause capable of supporting it.

in order to obtain suffrages; the elections will take place in the Actresses' dressing rooms, and the Leaders of a free people will be the creatures of a band of Histrions. The pen falls from my hand at the thought. Let the risk be dismissed as much as one pleases. Let me be accused of exaggerating the danger I foresee; I have only one word more to say. Whatever may happen, these people must reform their morals during their stay with us, or they must corrupt ours. When this alternative has ceased to alarm us, the actors can come; they can do us no more harm.

These, Sir, are the considerations which I had to propose to the public and to you on the question which you were pleased to debate in an Article to which it was, in my opinion, entirely alien. If my reasons, less strong than they seem to me, should not have sufficient weight to counterbalance yours, you will at least grant that, in a State as small as the Republic of Geneva, all innovations are dangerous and that they ought never to be made without urgent and grave motives. Let the pressing necessity of this one then be shown. Where are the disorders which force us to fall back on so suspect an expedient? Is everything lost without this? Is our city so big, have vice and idleness already made such progress that it can henceforth no longer subsist without the theater? You tell us that it tolerates worse entertainments which shock both taste and morals alike, but there is quite a difference between presenting bad morals and attacking good ones; for this latter effect depends less on the qualities of the entertainment than on the impression it makes. In this sense, what relation is there between a few migratory farces and a resident Drama, between the smutty talk of a charlatan and the regular performances of Dramatic works, between the booths at the Fair, built to divert the populace, and an esteemed Theater where the decent folk will think they are being instructed? One of these amusements is without consequence and stays forgotten the day after; but the other is an important affair which merits all the attention of the government. In every land it is permitted to amuse the children, and anyone who wants to can be a child without much difficulty. If these insipid shows lack taste, so much the better; they will become tiresome more quickly; if they are coarse they will be less seductive. Vice hardly insinuates itself by shocking decency but by taking on its likeness; and dirty words are more opposed to politeness than to good morals. This is why the expressions are always more refined and the ears more scrupulous in the most corrupted countries. Is it noticeable that conversations in the marketplace excite the passions of the young very much? The discreet talk of the theater does it quite well though, and it is better that a maiden see a hundred parades than a single performance of the *Oracle*.[86]

Besides, I admit that I would, so far as I am concerned, prefer it if we could do entirely without these booths, and if, both as children and grown-ups, we were able to draw our pleasures and our duties from our state and from ourselves; but, from the fact that we ought to drive out the mountebanks, it does not follow that we must call upon the actors. You have seen the city of Marseilles in your own country fighting off a similar innovation for a long time, resisting even the reiterated orders of the Minister and preserving still, in this contempt for a frivolous amusement, an honorable likeness of its ancient liberty. What an example for a City that has not yet lost its liberty.

Above all, let no one think that such an establishment can be made in the form of a trial to be abolished when harmful consequences are perceived; for those consequences are not done away with along with the theater which produces them; they remain when their cause is removed, and, as soon as they begin to be felt, they are irremediable. Our altered morals, our changed tastes, will not recover their health since they will be corrupted; even our pleasures, our innocent pleasures, will have lost their charm; the Theater will have deprived us of our taste for them forever. Idleness, become a necessity, the emptiness of our time, that we will no longer be able to fill up, will make us a burden to ourselves; the Actors in parting will leave us boredom as earnest for their return; it will force us to recall them soon or to do worse. We will have done wrong in establishing the Drama, we will do wrong in letting it subsist, we will do wrong in destroying it; after the first fault, we will have the choice only of our ills.

What! Ought there to be no Entertainments in a Republic? On the contrary, there ought to be many. It is in Republics that they were born, it is in their bosom that they are seen to flourish with a truly festive air. To what peoples is it more fitting to assemble often and form among themselves sweet bonds of pleasure and joy than to those who have so many reasons to like one another and remain forever united? We already have many of these public festivals; let us have even more; I will be only the more charmed for it. But let us not adopt these exclusive Entertainments which close up a small number of people in melancholy fashion in a gloomy cavern, which keep them fearful and immobile in silence and inaction, which give them only prisons, lances, soldiers, and afflicting images of servitude and inequality to see. No, happy Peoples, these are not your festivals. It is in the open air, under the sky, that you ought to gather and give yourselves to the sweet sentiment of your happiness. Let your pleasures not be effeminate or mercenary; let nothing that has an odor of constraint and selfishness poison them; let them be free and gen-

erous like you are, let the sun illuminate your innocent entertainments; you will constitute one yourselves, the worthiest it can illuminate.

But what then will be the objects of these entertainments? What will be shown in them? Nothing, if you please. With liberty, wherever abundance reigns, well-being also reigns. Plant a stake crowned with flowers in the middle of a square; gather the people together there, and you will have a festival. Do better yet; let the Spectators become an Entertainment to themselves; make them actors themselves; do it so that each sees and loves himself in the others so that all will be better united. I need not have recourse to the games of the ancient Greeks; there are modern ones which are still in existence, and I find them precisely in our city. Every year we have reviews, public prizes, Kings of the harquebus, the cannon, and sailing. Institutions so useful* and so agreeable cannot be too much multiplied; of such Kings there cannot be too many. Why should we not do to make ourselves active and robust what we do to become skilled in the use of arms? Has the Republic less need of workers than of soldiers? Why should we not found, on the model of the military prizes, other prizes for Gymnastics, wrestling, running, discus, and the various bodily exercises? Why should we not animate our Boatmen by contests on the Lake? Could there be an Entertainment in the world more brilliant than seeing, on this vast and superb body of water, hundreds of Boats, elegantly equipped, starting together at the given signal to go and capture a Flag planted at the finish, then serving as a cortege for the victor returning in triumph to receive his well-earned prize? All festivals of this sort are expensive only insofar as one wishes them to be, and the gathering alone renders them quite magnificent. Nevertheless, one must have been

* It does not suffice that the People have bread and live in their stations. They must live in them pleasantly, in order that they fulfil their duties better, that they torment themselves less over changing their stations, that public order be better established. Good morals depend more than is thought on each man's being satisfied in his estate. Deceit and the spirit of intrigue come from uneasiness and discontentment; everything goes badly when one aspires to the position of another. One must like his trade to do it well. The disposition of the State is only good and solid when, each feeling in his place, the private forces are united and co-operate for the public good instead of wasting themselves one against the other as they do in every badly constituted State. This given, what must we think of those who would wish to take the festivals, the pleasures, and every form of amusement away from the People as so many distractions which turn them away from their work? This maxim is barbarous and false. Too bad, if the people have only the time to earn their bread; they must still have some in which to eat it with joy; otherwise they will not earn it for long. This just and beneficent God, who wants them to keep busy, wants also that they relax; nature imposes exercises and repose, pleasure and pain alike upon them. The distaste for labor overwhelms the unfortunate more than labor itself. Do you then want to make a people active and laborious? Give them festivals, offer them amusements which make them like their stations and prevent them from craving for a sweeter one. Days thus lost will turn the others to better account. Preside at their pleasures in order to make them decent; this is the true means to animate their labors.

there with the Genevans to understand with what ardor they devote themselves to them. They are unrecognizable; they are no longer that steady people which never deviates from its economic rules; they are no longer those slow reasoners who weigh everything, including joking, in the scale of judgment. The people are lively, gay, and tender; their hearts are then in their eyes as they are always on their lips; they seek to communicate their joy and their pleasures. They invite, importune, and coerce the new arrivals and dispute over them. All the societies constitute but one, all become common to all. It is almost a matter of indifference at which table one seats oneself. It would be the image of Lacedaemon if a certain lavishness did not prevail here; but this very lavishness is at this time in its place, and the sight of the abundance makes that of the liberty which produces it more moving.

Winter, a time consecrated to the private association of friends, is less appropriate to public festivals. There is, however, one sort concerning which I wish there were not so many scrupulous doubts raised, that is, the balls for young marriageable persons. I have never understood why people are so worried about Dancing and the gatherings it occasions, as if there were something worse about dancing than singing, as if these amusements were not both equally an inspiration of nature, as if it were a crime for those who are destined to be united to be merry together in a decent recreation. Man and woman were formed for one another. God wants them to fulfil their destiny, and certainly the first and holiest of all the bonds of Society is marriage. All the false Religions combat nature; ours alone, which follows and regulates it proclaims a divine institution and one suitable for man. It ought not to add to the impediments which the civil order provides to marriage, difficulties which the Gospel does not prescribe and that every good Government condemns. But let me be instructed as to where young marriageable persons will have occasion to get a taste for one another and to see one another with more propriety and circumspection than in a gathering where the eyes of the public are constantly open and upon them, forcing them to be reserved, modest, and to watch themselves most carefully? In what way is God offended by an agreeable exercise, one that is salutary and befitting the vivacity of young people, which consists in presenting themselves to one another with grace and seemliness, and on which the spectator imposes a gravity out of which they would not dare to step for an instant? Can a more decent way of not deceiving one another, at least as to their persons, be imagined, or one which better permits them to show themselves off, with the charms and the faults which they might possess, to the people whose interest it is to know them well before being obliged to love them?

Does not the duty of cherishing each other reciprocally imply that of pleasing each other; and is it not an attention worthy of two virtuous and Christian persons who seek to be united to prepare their hearts in this way for the mutual love which God imposes on them?

What happens in those places where an eternal constraint prevails, where the most innocent gaiety is punished as a crime, where the young people of the two sexes never dare to gather in public, and where the indiscreet severity of a Pastor can only preach a servile uneasiness, dreariness, and boredom in the name of God? They evade intolerable tyranny, which nature and reason disavow. For the permitted pleasures which a lively and frolicsome youth is denied are substituted more dangerous ones. Private meetings adroitly concerted take the place of public gatherings. By dint of hiding themselves as if they were guilty, they are tempted to become so. Innocent joy is likely to evaporate in the full light of day; but vice is a friend of shadows, and never have innocence and mystery lived long together.

As for me, far from blaming such simple entertainments, I wish they were publicly authorized and that all private disorder were anticipated by converting them into solemn and periodic Balls, open without distinction to all the marriageable young. I wish that a Magistrate,* named by the Council, would not think it beneath him to preside at these Balls. I wish that the Fathers and Mothers would attend to watch over their children, as witnesses of their grace and their address, of the applause they may have merited, and thus to enjoy the sweetest Entertainment [*spectacle*] that can move a paternal heart. I wish that in general all married women be admitted among the number of the Spectators and judges without being permitted to profane conjugal dignity by dancing themselves; for, to what decent purpose could they thus show themselves off in public? I wish that in the hall there be formed a comfortable and honorable section reserved for the old people of both sexes who, having already given Citizens to the fatherland, would now see their grandchildren prepare themselves to become citizens. I wish that no one enter or leave without saluting this box, and that all the young couples come before beginning and after having finished their dance and make a deep bow there in order to accustom them early to respect old age. I do not doubt that this pleasant meeting of the two extremes of human life will

* Over every guild and public society of which our State is composed presides one of these Magistrates under the name of *Lord-Commissioner*. They attend all the gatherings and even the feasts. Their presence does not prevent a decent familiarity among the members of the association; but it maintains everyone in the respect that they ought to have for the laws, morals, and propriety, even in the midst of joy and pleasure. This institution is very fine and forms one of the great bonds which unite the people to their leaders.

give to this gathering a certain touching aspect and that sometimes in this box tears will be seen being shed, tears of joy and memory, capable perhaps of eliciting them from a sensitive spectator. I wish that every year, at the last Ball, the young girl, who during the preceding one has comported herself most decently, most modestly, and has most pleased everyone in the judgment of the Members of the Box, be honored with a crown from the hand of the Lord Commissioner* and with the title of Queen of the Ball, which she will bear throughout the year. I wish that at the close of this gathering she be brought back home by a cortege, and that her Father and Mother be congratulated and thanked for having a daughter of so good a nature and for raising her so well. Finally, I wish that, if she happens to marry in the course of the year, the Magistrates make her a present or accord her some public distinction so that this honor be a thing serious enough never to become a subject of joking.

It is true that often a bit of partiality might be feared if the age of the Judges did not leave all preference to merit. And even if modest beauty were sometimes favored, what would be the great harm in that? Having more assaults to sustain, does it not need to be encouraged more? Is it not a gift of nature just as talents are? What harm is there if beauty obtains some honors which excite it to make itself worthy of them and can content amour-propre without offending virtue?

In perfecting this project along these lines and giving a tone of gallantry and amusement to it, these festivals would serve many useful purposes which would make of them an important component of the training in law and order and good morals. The young, having certain and decent meeting places, would be less tempted to seek for more dangerous ones. Each Sex would devote itself more patiently in the intervals to occupations and pleasures which are fitting to it, and would be more easily consoled for being deprived of the continual company of the other. Individuals in every station, especially Fathers and Mothers, would have the resource of an agreeable Entertainment. The attentions to the adornment of their daughters would be an object of amusement for the women which in its turn would provide diversion for many others. And this adornment, having an innocent and laudable object, would there be entirely in its place. These occasions for gathering in order to form unions and for arranging the establishment of families would be frequent means for reconciling divided families and bolstering the peace so necessary in our State. Without altering the authority of Fathers, the inclinations of children would be somewhat freer; the first choice would depend some-

* See the preceding note.

what more on their hearts; the agreements of age, temperament, taste, and character would be consulted somewhat more; and less attention would be paid to those of station and fortune which make bad matches when they are satisfied at the expense of the others. The relations becoming easier, the marriages would be more frequent; these marriages, less circumscribed by rank, would prevent the emergence of parties, temper excessive inequality, and maintain the body of the People better in the spirit of its constitution; these Balls, thus directed, would bring the people together not so much for a public Entertainment as for the gathering of a big family, and from the bosom of joy and pleasures would be born the preservation, the concord, and the prosperity of the Republic.*

On the basis of these ideas it would be easy to establish, at small cost and without danger, more Entertainments than are necessary to make a visit to our city pleasant and cheerful, even for foreigners who, finding nothing like it anywhere else, would come at least to see something unique. Although, to tell the truth, for many good reasons I regard this influx as a problem far more than as an advantage; and I am persuaded, as for myself, that never did a foreigner come to Geneva who did not do more harm than good.

* It is sometimes amusing for me to imagine the judgments that many will make of my tastes on the basis of my writings. On the basis of this one they will not fail to say: "that man is crazy about dancing"; it bores me to watch dancing; "he cannot bear the drama"; I love the drama passionately; "he has an aversion to women"; on that score I shall be only too easily vindicated: "he is vexed at actors"; I have every reason to be pleased with them, and friendship with the only one of them whom I have known personally can only do honor to a decent man. Same judgment on the Poets whose plays I am forced to censure: those who are dead will not be to my taste, and I will be piqued with the living. The truth is that Racine charms me and that I have never willingly missed a performance of Molière. If I have spoken less of Corneille, it is because, having less frequented his plays and lacking books, I do not remember him well enough to cite him. As to the author of *Atrée* and *Catalina,* I have seen him only once, and this was to receive a service from him. I esteem his genius and respect his old age; but, whatever honor I have for his person, I owe only justice to his plays, and I cannot acquit my debts at the expense of the public good and the truth. If my Writings inspire me with some pride, it is for the purity of intention which dictates them, it is for the disinterestedness for which few authors have given me the example and which very few will wish to imitate. Never did personal views soil the desire to be useful to others which put the pen in my hand and I have almost always written against my own interest. *Vitam impendere vero:*[87] this is the motto I have chosen and of which I feel I am worthy. Readers, I may deceive myself, but I do not deceive you willingly; beware of my errors and not my bad faith. Love of the public good is the only passion which causes me to speak to the public; I can then forget myself, and if someone offends me, I keep quiet about him for fear that anger make me unjust. This maxim is beneficial for my enemies in that they can hurt me at their leisure and without fear of reprisals, for the Readers who do not fear that my hate imposes on them, and especially for me who, keeping quiet while I am insulted, suffer at least only the hurt which is done me and not that which I would experience in returning it. Holy and pure truth to whom I have consecrated my life, never will my passions soil the sincere love which I have for thee; neither interest nor fear can corrupt the homage that I am wont to offer thee, and my pen will refuse thee only what it fears to accord to vengeance.

But do you know, Sir, whom we ought to try to attract and keep within our walls? The Genevans themselves who, with a sincere love of their country, all have so great an inclination to travel that there is no land where they are not to be found dispersed. Half of our citizens, scattered throughout the rest of Europe and the world, live and die far from their fatherland; I would cite myself with more sorrow if I were less useless to it. I know that we are forced to go abroad and seek the resources which our soil refuses to us, and that we could hardly subsist if we were confined there; but at least let this banishment not be eternal for all. Let those whose labors Heaven has blest come, like the Bee, bringing the fruit back to the hive; let them gladden their Fellow Citizens with the Sight of their fortune, animate the emulation of the young, enrich their country with their wealth, and enjoy modestly at home a substance decently acquired abroad. Is it with theaters, always less perfect in our city than elsewhere, that they will be made to return? Will they leave the Theater of Paris or London to go to see that of Geneva? No, no, Sir, it is not thus that they can be brought back. Each must feel that he could not find elsewhere what he left in his country; an invincible charm must recall him to the seat he ought never to have quitted; the memory of their first exercises, their first entertainments, their first pleasures, must remain profoundly engraved in their hearts; the sweet impressions made during youth must live and be strengthened at an advanced age while countless others are blotted out; in the midst of the pomp of great States and their dreary magnificence, a secret voice must incessantly cry out to them from the depths of their souls: Ah! where are the games and festivals of my youth? Where is the concord of the citizens? Where is the public fraternity? Where is the pure joy and the real gaiety? Where are the peace, the liberty, the equity, the innocence? Let us go and seek out all that again. My God! with the heart of a Genevan, with a city so cheerful, a land so charming, a government so just, pleasures so true and so pure and all that is needed to delight in them, what can prevent us all from adoring our fatherland?

Thus did that Sparta, which I shall have never cited enough as the example that we ought to follow, recall its citizens by modest festivals and games without pomp; thus in Athens, in the midst of the fine arts, thus in Susa, in the lap of luxury and softness, the bored Spartan longed for his coarse feasts and his fatiguing exercises. It is at Sparta that, in laborious idleness, everything was pleasure and entertainment; it is there that the harshest labors passed for recreations and that small relaxations formed a public instruction; it is there that the citizens, constantly assembled, consecrated the whole of life to amusements which were the great business of the State and to games from which they relaxed only for war.

I already hear the wits asking me if, among so many marvelous instructions, I do not also want to introduce the dances of the young Lacedaemonian girls into the Genevan festivals? I answer that I should like to believe that our eyes and our hearts were chaste enough to bear such a Sight, and that young people in this state at Geneva, as at Sparta, would be clothed by public decency. But, whatever esteem I have for my fellow citizens, I know too well how far it is from them to the Lacedaemonians; and I propose for them only the Spartan institutions of which they are not yet incapable. If the wise Plutarch took it upon himself to justify the practice in question, why must I take it upon myself after him?[88] Everything is said in admitting that this practice was fitting only for the pupils of Lycurgus, that their frugal and laborious lives, their pure and severe morals, the strength of soul which belonged to them, could alone make innocent for their eyes an Entertainment so shocking for any people which is only decent.

But can it be thought that the artful dress of our women is fundamentally less dangerous than an absolute nudity the habit of which would soon turn the first effects into indifference and perhaps distaste? Is it not known that statues and paintings only offend the eyes when a mixture of clothing renders the nudity obscene? The immediate power of the senses is weak and limited; it is through the intermediary of the imagination that they make their greatest ravages; it is the business of the imagination to irritate the desires in lending to their objects even more attractions than nature gave them; it is the imagination which scandalizes the eye in revealing to it what it sees not only as naked but as something that ought to be clothed. There is no garment so modest that a glance inflamed by imagination does not penetrate with its desires. A young Chinese woman extending the tip of her foot, covered and shod, will wreak more havoc in Peking than the most beautiful girl in the world dancing stark naked on the banks of the Taygetus. But when they dress with so much art and so little correctness as the modern women do, when less is shown only to make more desired, when the obstacle set before the eyes serves only to excite the imagination more, when a part of the object is hidden only to set off what is exposed:

Heu! male tum mites defendit pampinus uvas.[89]

Let us finish these many digressions. Thank Heaven, this is the last; I am at the end of this writing. I presented the festivals of Lacedaemon as a model for those I should like to see among us. It is not only because of their object but also their simplicity that I find them worthy of recommendation; without pomp, without luxury, without display, everything

in them breathes, along with a secret patriotic charm which makes them attractive, a certain martial spirit befitting free men.* Without business and without pleasures, at least those that bear the name with us, in this sweet uniformity they spent the day without finding it too long, and life without finding it too short. They came back every evening, cheerful and hearty, took their frugal meal, content with their Fatherland, their fellow citizens, and themselves. If some example of their public pastimes be asked for, here is one reported by Plutarch.[90] There were, he says, always three dances in as many bands, divided according to the differences in age; and they danced to the singing of each band. That of the old began first, singing the following couplet:

We were once young,
Valiant and hardy

There followed that of the men who sang in their turn, beating their arms in cadence:

* I remember having been struck in my childhood by a rather simple entertainment the impression of which has nevertheless always stayed with me in spite of time and variety of experience. The Regiment of Saint-Gervais had done its exercises, and, according to the custom, they had supped by companies; most of those who formed them gathered after Supper in the St. Gervais square and started dancing all together, officers and soldiers, around the fountain, to the basin of which the Drummers, the Fifers and the torch bearers had mounted. A dance of men, cheered by a long meal, would seem to present nothing very interesting to see; however, the harmony of five or six hundred men in uniform, holding one another by the hand and forming a long ribbon which wound around, serpent-like, in cadence and without confusion, with countless turns and returns, countless sorts of figured evolutions, the excellence of the tunes which animated them, the sound of the Drums, the glare of the torches, a certain military pomp in the midst of pleasure, all this created a very lively sensation that could not be experienced coldly. It was late; the women were in bed; all of them got up. Soon the windows were full of Female Spectators who gave a new zeal to the actors; they could not long confine themselves to their windows and they came down; the wives came to their husbands, the servants brought wine; even the children, awakened by the noise, ran half-clothed amidst their Fathers and Mothers. The dance was suspended; now there were only embraces, laughs, healths, and caresses. There resulted from all this a general emotion that I could not describe but which, in universal gaiety, is quite naturally felt in the midst of all that is dear to us. My Father, embracing me, was seized with trembling which I think I still feel and share. "Jean-Jacques," he said to me, "love your country. Do you see these good Genevans? They are all friends, they are all brothers; joy and concord reign in their midst. You are a Genevan; one day you will see other Peoples; but even if you should travel as much as your Father, you will not find their likes."

They wanted to pick up the dance again, but it was impossible; they did not know what they were doing any more; all heads were spinning with a drunkenness sweeter than that of wine. After staying somewhat longer to laugh and chat in the square, they had to part, each withdrawing peaceably with his family; and this is how these lovable and prudent women brought their husbands back home, not in disturbing their pleasures but in going to share them. I am well aware that this Entertainment, which moved me so, would be without appeal for countless others; one must have eyes made for seeing it and a heart made for feeling it. No, the only pure joy is public joy, and the true sentiments of nature reign only over the people. Ah! Dignity, daughter of pride and mother of boredom, have your melancholy Slaves ever had a similar moment in their lives?

We are so now
ready for all comers.

and then came the children, who answered them singing with all their force:

And we will soon be so,
we who will surpass you all.

These, Sir, are the Entertainments which Republics need. As to the one your article *Geneva* forced me to treat in this essay, if ever private interest succeeds in establishing it within our walls, I predict unhappy effects; I have shown some of them, I could show more; but that would be to fear too much an imaginary misfortune which the vigilance of our Magistrates will be able to prevent. I do not pretend to instruct men wiser than me. It suffices for me to have said enough to console the youth of my land for being deprived of an amusement which would cost the fatherland so dear. I exhort this fortunate Youth to profit from the opinion with which your article ends.[91] May it recognize and merit its fate! May it always feel how much solid happiness is preferable to the vain pleasures which destroy it! May it transmit to its descendants the virtues, the liberty, and the peace which it has inherited from its Fathers! This is the last wish with which I end my Writings; it is the one with which my life will end.

Correspondence Relating to the *Letter to d'Alembert*

Letter of M. d'Alembert to M. J. J. Rousseau

On the Article "Geneva" Taken from the Seventh Volume of *l'Encyclopédie*

Take away from me your pruning hook, instrument of harm.
La Fontaine, Book XII. Fable XX.[1]

The Letter that you did me the honor of addressing to me, SIR, about the article *Geneva* from the Encyclopédie, had all the success you could have expected. Gaining the interest of Philosophers by means of the truths spread throughout your work, and people of taste by means of the eloquence and warmth of your style, you have been able to please the multitude even more by means of the very disdain that you bear witness to for it, and that you perhaps might have brought out more by affecting to show it less.

I do not propose to respond precisely to your Letter, but to converse with you about what constitutes its subject, and to communicate to you my good or bad reflections; it would be too dangerous to fight against a pen like yours and I do not at all seek to write brilliant things, but true ones.

Another reason induces me not to remain in silence; that is the gratitude I owe you for the consideration with which you have combated me. On this point alone I flatter myself for not being second to you at all. You have given to Literary People an example worthy of you and that perhaps they will finally imitate when they know their true interests better. If satire and insult were not the favorite tone of criticism today, it would be more honorable for those who practice it, and more useful to those who are its object. People would not be at all afraid of debasing themselves in answering it; they would only hope to explain themselves with candor and reciprocal esteem; the truth would be known, and no one would be offended; for it is less the truth that wounds than the manner of saying it.

In your letter you had three principal objects; to attack the theater taken in itself; to show that even if morality could tolerate it, the constitution of Geneva would not permit it to have one; finally to justify the Pastors of your Church with regard to the sentiments I attributed to them in the matter of religion. I shall follow these three objects with you, and I shall pause on the first to begin with, as the one that interests the greatest number of Readers. In spite of the extensiveness of the matter, I shall try to be as brief as I can; it remains with you alone to be lengthy and to be read, and I must not flatter myself with being as felicitous in digressions.

The character of your philosophy, sir, is to be firm and inexorable in its progression. Once your principles have been posited, the consequences are what they can be; so much the worse for us if they are distressing; but however distressing they might be, they never seem to you enough so to force you to reconsider the principles. Very far from fearing the objections that can be made against your paradoxes, you foresee these objections by answering them with new paradoxes. I seem to see in you—doubtless the comparison will not offend you—that intrepid leader of the Reformers, who in order to defend himself concerning one heresy put forward a more serious one, who began by attacking indulgences, and ended by abolishing the Mass. You have claimed that the cultivation of the Sciences and the Arts is harmful to morals;[2] one could object to you that in a civilized society, that cultivation is necessary at least up to a certain point, and ask you to set its limits; you have extricated yourself from the quandary by cutting the knot, and you believed you could make us happy and perfect only by reducing us to the state of beasts.[3] In order to prove what so many French Operas had so well proved before you, *that we do not have any music at all, you have declared that we cannot have any, and that if we ever did have any, it would be so much the worse for us.*[4] Finally, with the intention of inspiring your compatriots with horror for Drama more effectively, you represent it as one of the most pernicious inventions of men; and to use your own terms, as an entertainment *more barbarous than combats of gladiators.*[5]

You proceed in an orderly manner, and do not strike the great blows at first. By looking at the theater only as an amusement, this reason alone appears sufficient to you to condemn it. *Life is so short,* you say, *and time so precious!*[6] Who doubts it, Sir? But at the same time life is so unhappy and pleasure so rare! Why begrudge men, destined by nature almost only to weep and to die, some fleeting diversions that help them to bear the bitterness or the insipidity of their existence? If the theater considered from this point of view has a defect in my eyes, it is to be too slight a

distraction and too weak an amusement for us, precisely for the reason that it presents itself to us too much from the idea of amusement alone, and from amusement necessary for our idleness. Because illusion is rarely found in theatrical representations, we see them only as a game that leaves us almost entirely alone. Moreover the superficial and momentary pleasure they can produce, is weakened further by the very nature of this pleasure, which—imperfect as it is—has the inconvenience of being too sought after, and if one can speak this way, summoned from too far off. It seems to me that to imagine such a type of diversion men must have previously tried and used up many sorts. Someone who was cruelly bored (it was probably a Prince) must have had the first idea for this refined amusement, which consists in representing on the stage the misfortunes and the failings of our fellows, in order to console us for or cure us of our own, and by making us into spectators of life, from the actors we are, in order to soften its burdens and misfortunes for us. Sometimes this sad reflection comes to trouble the pleasure I taste in the Theater; through the pleasant impressions of the scene, when from time to time in spite of myself and with a sort of sorrow I perceive the distressing imprint of its origin; above all in those moments of rest, in which the suspended and dampened action, leaving the imagination tranquil, no longer shows anything but the representation instead of the thing, and the actor instead of the character. Such is, Sir, the sad destiny of man even in his very pleasures; the less he can do without them, the less he tastes them; and the more he puts effort and study into them, the less tangible their impression is. To convince us of this by an even more striking example than that of the Theater, let us cast our eyes on those houses decorated by vanity and by opulence, which the vulgar believe to be a seat of delights, and where the refinements of an elaborate luxury shine everywhere. To the sated rich man who had them built, they only too often recall the importunate image of the boredom that made these refinements necessary for him.

However this may be, Sir, we need pleasures too much to make ourselves difficult about the number or the selection. Doubtless all our affected and artificial diversions, invented and made customary by idleness, are far beneath the pure and simple pleasures that should be offered to us by the duties of a Citizen, friend, husband, and son, and father: but make these duties less painful and less sad if you can; or permit us, after we have fulfilled them as best we can, to console ourselves also as best we can for the troubles that accompany them. Make peoples happier, and consequently Citizens less rare, friends more sensitive and more constant, fathers more just, children more tender, women more faithful and truer;

then we shall not look for any other pleasures than those that are tasted in the bosom of friendship, fatherland, nature, and love. But the age of Astraea[7] has not existed for a long time except in fables, you know, if it ever existed elsewhere. Solon said that he had given Athenians, not the best laws in themselves, but the best they could observe.[8] The same is true of the duties that a healthy Philosophy prescribes to men, and of the pleasures it permits them. It ought to assume us to be and take us as we are, full of passions and weaknesses, discontent with ourselves and others, combined with a natural inclination for idleness in anxiety and activity in desires. What is left for Philosophy to do but to alleviate in our eyes the agitation that torments us or the languor that consumes us by means of the distractions it offers us? Few people have, as you do Sir, the strength to look for their happiness in the sad and uniform tranquillity of solitude. But doesn't this resource ever fail even you? Don't you experience in the bosom of repose, and sometimes of work, those moments of disgust and boredom that make relaxation and distractions necessary? Moreover, society would be too unhappy if all those who could suffice to themselves as you do banished themselves from it by a voluntary exile. In fleeing men, that is to say in avoiding surrendering himself to them—for that is the only way he ought to flee them—the wise man is at least accountable to them for his instruction and his example. It is in the midst of his fellows that the Supreme Being has marked out his abode for him, and it is not permitted to Philosophers any more than to Kings to be away from home.

I return to the pleasures of the Theater. Reasonably you have left to the ranters of the pulpit that hackneyed argument against the theater, that it is contrary to the spirit of Christianity, which obliges us to mortify ourselves ceaselessly. On this principle the relaxations that religion condemns the least would be prohibited. The austere solitary people of Port Royal, great Preachers of Christian mortification, and by that reason great adversaries of Drama, did not refuse themselves in their solitude, as Racine remarked, the pleasure of making wooden shoes, and that of ridiculing the Jesuits.[9]

It seems, then, that the theater—still considered only from the side of amusement—can be granted to men, at least as a toy that one gives to children who are suffering. But it is not only a toy that some claim to give them, it is useful lessons disguised under the appearance of pleasure. Not only have they wanted to distract these adult children from their pains; they wanted this Theater—where they apparently go only to laugh or to cry—to become for them, almost without them noticing it, a school of morals and virtue. This, Sir, is what you believe the Theater incapable of.

You attribute to it even an absolutely opposite effect, and you claim to prove this.

To begin with, I agree with you that dramatic Writers have pleasing as their principal goal, and that being useful is at most the second; but if in fact they are useful, what does it matter whether it is their first or their second object? Let us be of good faith with ourselves, sir, and agree that in this the Authors of the Theater have nothing that distinguishes them from others. Public esteem is the principal goal of every Writer; and the first truth he wishes to teach his Readers is that he is worthy of that esteem. In vain would he pretend to disdain it in his works; indifference keeps quiet and does not make so much noise; even the insults told to a Nation are sometimes only a sharper means of recalling oneself to its memory. And the famous Cynic of Greece might soon have left his barrel from which he braved prejudices and Kings, if the Athenians had gone by without looking at him and listening.[10] True Philosophy does not at all consist in trampling glory underfoot, and still less in saying that one does; but in not making one's happiness depend on it, even while seeking to deserve it. One writes, then, Sir, only in order to be read, and one wants to be read only in order to be esteemed; I add, in order to be esteemed by the multitude, by that very multitude, which elsewhere one counts (and with reason) for so little. A secret and importunate voice cries out to us that what is fine, great, and true pleases everyone, and that the one who does not obtain general support apparently lacks one of these qualities. Thus when one seeks the praises of the vulgar, it is less as a recompense that is flattering in itself, than as the surest token of the goodness of a work. The amour-propre that declares only moderate pretensions, by declaring that it limits itself to the approbation of the minority is a timid amour-propre that is consoling itself in advance, or a dissatisfied amour-propre that is consoling itself after the fact. But whatever the goal of a Writer might be, either to be praised or to be useful, this goal hardly matters to the public. That is not what gives the rule to its judgment; it is uniquely the degree of pleasure or enlightenment one has given it. It honors those who instruct it, it encourages those who amuse it, it applauds those who instruct it while amusing it. Now good pieces of Theater appear to me to unite these last two advantages. It is morality put into action, it is precepts reduced to examples. Tragedy offers us the misfortunes produced by the vices of men, Comedy, the ridicule attached to their faults; both put under the eyes what morality shows only in an abstract manner and at a sort of distance. By means of the emotions they excite in us they develop and fortify the feelings whose seed nature has put in our souls.

According to you, people go to isolate themselves at the theater; they go there to forget their neighbors, their fellow citizens, and their friends.[11] On the contrary, the theater is the one among all our pleasures that calls us back the most to other men, by means of the image it presents to us of human life, and by the impressions it gives us and it leaves us. A Poet in his enthusiasms, a Geometer in his deep meditations, are very much more isolated than one is at the Theater. But if the pleasures of the scene make us lose the memory of our fellows for a moment, isn't that the natural effect of every occupation that attracts us, of every amusement that carries us away? How many moments in life are there in which the most virtuous man forgets his compatriots and his friends without loving them less? and even you, Sir, haven't you renounced living with yours only in order to think about them always?

You have difficulty, you add, in understanding that rule of the Poetics of the ancients that the Theater purges the passions in exciting them.[12] The rule, it seems to me, is true, but it has the defect of being badly stated; and it is doubtless for that reason that it has produced so many disputes that people would have been spared if they had wished to understand each other. The passions against which the Theater tends to protect us are not the ones it excites; but it protects us from them by exciting in us the contrary passions. I understand here by *passion*, along with the majority of Writers on morality, any lively and deep affection that attaches us strongly to its object. In this sense, Tragedy makes use of useful and praiseworthy passions; it uses, for example, tears and compassion in *Zaïre*, in order to warn us against violent love; love of the fatherland in *Brutus*, in order to cure us of ambition; terror and fear of heavenly vengeance in *Semiramis*, in order to make us hate and avoid crime.[13] But if, along with some Philosophers, one attaches the idea of passion only to criminal affections, it will be necessary in that case to limit oneself to saying that the Theater corrects them by calling us back to the natural or virtuous affections that the Creator has given us to combat these very passions.

"That," you object, "is a very feeble remedy and sought for very far away: man is naturally good; love of virtue, whatever Philosophers might say, is innate in us; there is no one, except professional scoundrels, who before hearing a Tragedy is not already persuaded of the truths about which it is going to instruct us; and with regard to men plunged into crime, these truths are very useless to make them understand, and their heart has no ears at all."[14] Man is naturally good, I wish it so; that question would demand too long an examination: but you agree at least that society, interest, example can make man into a wicked being. I admit that

if he wishes to consult his reason, he will find that he cannot be happy except through virtue; and it is in that sense alone that you can regard love of virtue as innate in us, for apparently you do not believe that the *fetus* and the infants at the breast have any notion of the just and unjust. But reason—having to combat in us passions that stifle its voice—borrows help from the Theater in order to impress more deeply into our soul the truths we need to learn. If these truths glance off resolute scoundrels, they find an easier entrance into the heart of the others; they fortify themselves when they were already engraved there. Perhaps incapable of bringing round lost men, they are at least fit to prevent the others from being lost; for morality is like medicine, much more certain in what it does to prevent ills, than in what it attempts for curing them.

The effect of the morality of the Theater is thus less to bring about a sudden change in corrupt hearts, than to protect weak souls against vice by the exercise of decent feelings, and to affirm virtuous souls in these same feelings. You call "fleeting" and "sterile"[15] the emotions excited by the Theater, because the vivacity of these emotions seems to last only for the time of the piece; but their effect, for being slow and as it were intangible, is not less real in the eyes of the Philosopher. These emotions are the jolts by which the feeling of virtue needs to be reawakened in us; it is a fire that must be reanimated and nourished from time to time in order to keep it from being extinguished.

There, Sir, are the natural fruits of morality set into action in the Theater; there are the only ones that can be expected from it. Even if it does not have any more pronounced ones, do you believe that morality reduced to precepts produces much more? It is very rare for the best Books of morality to make virtuous those who are not disposed to it in advance. Is this a reason to proscribe these books? Ask our most famous Preachers how many conversions they make per year; they will answer you that one or two per century are made, moreover, that is in a good century. Based on that response, will you forbid them to preach and us to listen to them?

"Fine comparison!" you will say; "I agree that our Preachers and our Moralists do not have brilliant successes; at least they do not do great harm, except perhaps for the one of being boring sometimes; but it is precisely because the Authors of the Theater bore us less, that they harm us more. What a morality that presents so often to the eyes of the spectators unpunished monsters and fortunate crimes? An Atreus who applauds the horrors he performed against his brother; a Nero who poisons Britannicus in order to reign in peace; a Medea who slaughters her children, and who leaves jeering at their father's despair; a Mahomet who seduces

and who sweeps away a whole people, victim and instrument of his rages? What a frightful spectacle to show to men, how many triumphant scoundrels?"[16] Why not, Sir, if these scoundrels are rendered odious to them in their very triumphs? Can one instruct us better to virtue than by showing us on one side the successes of crime, and by making us envy on the other the fate of unfortunate virtue? It is not in prosperity or in ascendancy that one needs to learn to love it, it is in abjection and in misfortune. Now on this effect of the Theater, I can confidently call upon your own testimony; interrogate the spectators one after the other upon departing from these Tragedies you believe to be a school of vice and of crime; ask them which they would prefer to be, Britannicus or Nero, Atreus or Thyestes, Zopire or Mahomet; will they hesitate about the answer? and how would they hesitate? To limit us to a single example, what lesson more fitting for rendering fanaticism execrable and to make those who inspire it regarded as monsters, than that horrible tableau of the fourth act of *Mahomet,* in which one sees Seïde, made wild by a frightful zeal, plunging the dagger into the breast of his father? You would wish, Sir, to banish this Tragedy from our theater? If God were willing for it to be two hundred years older! The philosophic spirit that dictated it would be as long-standing among us, and perhaps might have spared the French nation, otherwise so peaceful and so gentle, the religious horrors and atrocities to which it abandoned itself. If this Tragedy leaves something to regret to the wise, it is to see in it only the heinous crimes caused by the zeal of a false religion, and not the even more deplorable misfortunes into which blind zeal for a true Religion can sometimes drag men.

What I am saying here about *Mahomet,* I believe I can say likewise about the other Tragedies that appear so dangerous to you. It seems to me that there is not one of them that does not leave in our soul some more or less developed great and useful lesson of morality after the performance. I see in *Oedipe* a Prince, much to be pitied doubtless, but still guilty, because he wished to defy his destiny even against the warning of the Gods; in *Phédra* a woman who might be rendered unhappy but not excusable by the violence of her passion, because she labors to ruin a virtuous Prince whom she could not make love her; in *Catiline,* the evil that the abuse of great talents can do to the human race; in *Médée* and in *Atrée,* the abominable effects of criminal and inflamed love, of vengeance and hatred. Besides if these pieces did not teach you any true morality directly, would they be blamable or pernicious for that? In order to justify them from this reproach it would be enough to pay attention to the praiseworthy, or at the very least, natural feelings they excite in us;

Oedipe and *Phédre* tenderness for our fellows, *Atrée* and *Médée* shuddering and horror. If we go to these Tragedies less to be instructed than to be moved, what would be our and their crime in that? They would be for decent folk, if it is permitted to use this comparison, what executions are for the people; a spectacle they witness out of the sole need that all men have of being moved. It is in fact this need, and not, as is commonly believed, a feeling of inhumanity that makes the people run to the executions of criminals. On the contrary they see these executions with an emotion of disturbance and of pity that sometimes reaches the point of horror and tears. These coarse, self-absorbed, and boorish souls need strong jolts to impress them. Tragedy is enough for more delicate and sensitive souls; sometimes even, as in *Médée* and *Atrée,* the impression is too violent for them. But far from being dangerous then, on the contrary it is tiresome; and can a feeling of this sort be a source of vices and heinous crimes? If, in the pieces in which the crime is exposed to our eyes, the wicked people are not always punished, the spectator is grieved that they are not: if he cannot accuse the Poet—always obliged to conform to History—for it, then it is, if I can speak this way, History itself that he accuses; and he says to himself upon leaving: Let us do our duty, and not interfere with the Gods.

Also in a Spectacle that leaves more liberty to the Poet, in our Opera for example, which moreover is neither the Spectacle of truth nor that of morals, I doubt that the Author would ever be pardoned for leaving crime unpunished. I remember formerly having seen in manuscript an Opera of *Atrée,* in which this monster perished struck by lightning, crying with a barbarous satisfaction:

Thunder, impotent Gods, strike, I am avenged.

This truly theatrical situation, seconded by frightening music, would have produced, it seems to me, one of the most fortunate denouements that could be imagined in the lyric Theater.

If they wished to have us take an interest in scoundrels in some Tragedies, these Tragedies have missed their object; it is the fault of the Poet and not of the genre; you will find even some Historians who are not exempt from this reproach; will you accuse history for it? Recollect, Sir, one of our masterpieces of this genre, *The Conspiracy of Venice* by the Abbé de St.-Réal,[17] and the sort of interest he inspires in us, without perhaps having wanted to, for these men who swore the ruin of their fatherland; after this reading one is almost distressed to see so much courage and skill having become useless; one reproaches oneself for this feeling, but it seizes us in spite of ourselves, and it is only from reflection that one

becomes concerned for the salvation of Venice. I shall admit to you on that occasion, against the rather generally established opinion, that the subject of *Venice Saved* appears to me much more fitting for the Theater than that of *Manlius Capitolinus,* although these two pieces hardly differ except in the names and station of the characters; wretches who conspire to free themselves are less odious than Senators who form a cabal to make themselves masters.

But what appears, Sir, to have shocked you the most in our pieces is the role that love is made to play in them. That passion, the great motive of the actions of men, is in effect the almost sole spring of the French Theater; and nothing appears more contrary to healthy morality than to reawaken such a dangerous feeling by means of seductive depictions and situations. Permit me to pose one question to you before answering you. Would you wish to banish love from society? I believe that would be a great good and a great evil for it. But you would try in vain to destroy that passion in men; moreover, it does not appear that your design was to forbid it to them, at least if one judges from the attractive descriptions you make of it, and that all the austerity of your Philosophy could not deny itself. Thus if one cannot, and if one perhaps should not stifle love in the heart of men, what is left to do, if not to direct it toward a decent end, and to show us its furies and its weaknesses in illustrious examples in order to defend us from it or cure us of it? You agree that this is the object of our Tragedies; but you claim that the object is missed by the very efforts that are made to fulfill it, that the impression of the feeling remains, and that the moral is soon forgotten. I shall take, Sir, in order to answer you, the very example that you take from the Tragedy of *Bérénice* in which Racine found the art of interesting us for five acts with these words alone, *I love you, you are Emperor and I leave;* and in which this great Poet has been able to make up for the lack of action and monotony of his subject by the charms of his style. Every sensitive spectator, I admit it, leaves this Tragedy with an afflicted heart, sharing in some manner the sacrifice that costs Titus so dearly, and the despair of the abandoned Bérénice. But if this spectator looks into the depths of his soul, and sounds the feeling that occupies him, what does he perceive, Sir? An afflicting retrospective upon the unhappiness of the human condition that almost always obliges us to make our passions give way to our duties. That is so true, that in the midst of the tears that we give to Bérénice, the happiness of the world attached to the sacrifice of Titus makes us inexorable concerning the necessity of this very sacrifice about which we are moaning; the interest that we take in his suffering, while admiring his virtue, would be changed into indignation if he succumbed

to his weakness. In vain would Racine himself, skillful as he is in the eloquence of the heart, have tried to represent to us this Prince, between Bérénice on one side and Rome on the other, sensitive to the prayers of a people who embrace his knees to hold him back, but giving way to the tears of his mistress; the most touching adieus of this Prince to his subjects would only make him more despicable to our eyes; we would see him only as a base Monarch who, in order to satisfy an obscure passion, gives up doing good for men, and who goes into the arms of a woman to forget their tears. If, on the contrary, something softens the pain of Titus in our eyes, it is the spectacle of a whole people having become happy from the courage of the Prince: nothing is more fit to console from misfortune than the good one does to those who suffer, and the virtuous man suspends the course of his own tears by wiping away those of other people. This Tragedy, sir, has moreover another advantage, that is, to make us greater in our own eyes, by showing us what efforts virtue renders us capable of. It awakens in us the most powerful and sweetest of all passions only to teach us to vanquish it by making it give way, when duty demands it, to more pressing and dearer interests. Thus it flatters us and raises us up at the very same time, by means of the sweet trial it causes us to make of the tenderness of our soul, and by the courage it inspires in us to repress the effects of this feeling, while preserving the feeling itself.

If, then, the depictions that are made of love in our Theaters were dangerous, this could be at most only in an already corrupt nation, for whom the remedies themselves would serve as poison; also I am persuaded, in spite of your contrary opinion, that theatrical representations are more useful for a people that has preserved its morals, than to the one that has lost them. But if the present state of our morals could make us regard Tragedy as a new means of corruption, the majority of our pieces appear to us very fitting to reassure us in that regard. What should, it seems to me, displease you the most in the love that we put so frequently in our Theaters, is not the liveliness with which it is depicted, it is the cold and subordinate role that it almost always plays there. Love, if one believes the multitude, is the soul of our Tragedies; as for me, it appears almost as rare there as in the world. In my eyes the majority of the characters of even Racine have less passion than metaphysics, less warmth than gallantry. What is the love in *Mithridates,* in *Iphigenia,* in *Britannicus,* in even *Bajazeth* and in *Andromache,* if one excepts some strokes in the roles of Roxane and Hermione? *Phédre* is perhaps the only work of that great man in which love is truly terrible and tragic; still there it is disfigured by the obscure intrigue of Hippolytus and Aricia. Arnauld had felt it well when he said to Racine, *Why this Hippolytus in love?* The reproach was less

from a casuist than from a man of taste. The answer that Racine made him is known: *ah, sir, without that, what would the fops have said?* Thus Racine sacrificed the perfection of his piece to the frivolity of the nation.[18] Love in Corneille is even more languishing and more misplaced: his genius for depicting this passion seems to have been exhausted in the *Cid,* and one must admit that he did depict it as a master; but in almost all of his other Tragedies love spoils the effect and dampens it. This exclusive and imperious feeling, so fit to console us from everything or to make everything unbearable for us, to make us enjoy our existence or to make us detest it, wishes to be in the Theater as it is in our hearts, to reign there alone and without sharing. Everywhere it does not play the first role, it is degraded by the second. The only character that suits it in Tragedy is that of vehemence, discord, and despair: deprive it of these qualities, it is nothing—if I dare to speak this way—but a common and bourgeois passion. But, it will be said, by depicting that kind of love, it will become monotonous, and all our pieces will resemble each other. And why imagine, as almost all our Authors have done, that a piece cannot interest us without love? Are we more difficult or more insensitive than the Athenians? And can we not find in their example an infinite number of other subjects capable of filling up the Theater worthily, the misfortunes of ambition, the spectacle of a hero in misfortune, the hatred of superstition and tyrants, love of fatherland, maternal tenderness? Do not insult our Frenchwomen by thinking that love alone can move them, as if they were neither citizens nor mothers. Haven't we seen them take an interest in *Mort de César,* and shed tears at *Merope?*[19]

I am coming, sir, to your objections to Comedy. In it you see only a continuous example of libertinism, treachery, and bad morals; women who deceive their husbands, children who rob their fathers; decent bourgeois duped by rascals from the Court. But I beg you to consider for a moment under what point of view all these vices are represented to us in the Theater. Is it to make them honored? In no way; there is no spectator at all who makes a mistake about it; it is to open our eyes about the source of these vices; to make us see in our own faults, in faults that in themselves do not wound honor at all, one of the most common causes of criminal actions that we reproach in others. What do we learn in *Georges Dandin?* That the disorderliness of women is the ordinary consequence of unsuitable marriages where vanity presided. In the *Bourgeois Gentilhomme?* That a bourgeois who wishes to leave his station, to have a women of the Court as his mistress and a great Lord as a friend will have as mistress only a ruined woman, and for friend only a decent thief. In the scenes of *Harpagon* and his son? That the avarice of fathers produces the

bad conduct of children. In sum in all, this very useful truth, *that the absurdities of society are a source of its disorders.* And what more effective manner is there of attacking our absurdities than to show us that they make others wicked at our expense? In vain would you say that in Comedy we are more struck by the absurdity being performed than by the vices of which this absurdity is the source. That must be so, as the natural object of Comedy is the correction of our faults by ridicule, their most powerful antidote, and not the correction of our vices, which requires remedies of another sort. But for all that, its effect is not to make us prefer vice to ridicule; it presupposes in us that horror at vice that it inspires in every well-born soul; it even makes use of that horror to combat our failings; and it is very simple that the feeling it presupposes affects us less at the moment of the performance than the one that it seeks to excite in us, without making us be led astray about which of these two feeling ought to dominate in our soul. If a small number of Comedies deviate from this praiseworthy object, and are almost uniquely a school of bad morals, one can compare their Authors to those heretics who, in order to recite the lie, have sometimes abused the pulpit of truth.

You do not limit yourself to general imputations. You attack, as a cruel satire of virtue, the *Misanthrope* of Molière, that masterpiece of our comic Theater; unless nevertheless *Tartuffe* is not even superior, either by the liveliness of the action, or by the theatrical situations, or finally by the variety and truth of the characters. I do not know, Sir, what you think of this latter piece, it was well made to find favor with you, if only from the aversion one cannot deny for such an odious sort of man that Molière has played and unmasked in it. But I come to the *Misanthrope.* According to you, in this Comedy Molière had the plan of rendering virtue ridiculous. It seems to me that the subject and the details of the piece, that the very feeling it produces in us, prove the contrary. Molière wished to teach us that intelligence and virtue are not enough for society, if we do not know how to take pity on the weaknesses of our fellows, and to put up with their very vices; that men are even more limited than wicked, and that they must be despised without being told it. Although the Misanthrope diverts the spectators, he is not ridiculous in their eyes for that: on the contrary, there is no one who does not esteem him, who is not even brought to like and to pity him. One laughs at his ill humor as at that of a well-born child who is very intelligent. The only thing I would dare to blame in the role of the Misanthrope, is that Alceste is not always wrong to be angry against the reasonable and philosophic friend whom Molière wanted to oppose to him as a model of the conduct one ought to maintain with men. Philinte has always appeared to me—not absolutely as you

claim, an odious character—but an irresolute character, full of wisdom in his maxims and of falsity in his conduct. Nothing more sensible than what he says to the Misanthrope in the first scene, about the necessity of accommodating himself to the failings of men; nothing weaker than his answer to the reproaches heaped upon him by the Misanthrope about the affected welcome he just made to a man whose name he does not know. He does not deny the exaggeration that he put into that welcome, and by that gives a great advantage to the Misanthrope. On the contrary, he ought to have answered that what Alceste had taken for an exaggerated welcome was only an ordinary and cold compliment, one of those formulas of politeness with which men have agreed to pay each other reciprocally when they have nothing to say to each other. The Misanthrope has an even finer hand in the scene of the sonnet. It is not at all Philinte that Oronte is coming to consult with, it is Alceste; and nothing obliges Philinte to praise Oronte's sonnet as he does wrongly and contradictorily, and even to interrupt the reading with his insipid praises. He should have waited for Oronte to ask him his opinion, and then limited himself to general remarks and a weak approbation, because he feels that Oronte wants to be praised, and that in bagatelles of this sort one owes the truth only to one's friends; even then they must have a great desire or great need for one to tell it to them. The weak approbation of Philinte would not any less have produced what Molière wanted, the fury of Alceste who prides himself on truth in the most indifferent things, at the risk of wounding those to whom he tells it. That anger of the Misanthrope at the complacency of Philinte would only have been funnier, because it would have been less well grounded; and the situation of the characters would have produced just as great a Stage business, as Philinte would have been divided between the perplexity of contradicting Alceste and the fear of shocking Oronte. But I become aware, Sir, that I am giving lessons to Molière.

You claim that in this scene of the sonnet, the Misanthrope is almost a Philinte, and his "I don't say that," repeated before stating his opinion frankly, appears out of his character according to you. Permit me not to share your sentiment. Molière's Misanthrope is not a truthful man; his "I don't say thats," and above all the manner in which he ought to pronounce them, make it adequately understood that he finds the sonnet detestable; it is only when Oronte presses him and pushes him to the wall that he ought to raise the mask and quarrel openly with him. Nothing, it seems to me, is better managed and more skillfully developed than that scene; and I must render this justice to our modern spectators, that there are few scenes that they hear with more pleasure. Also I do not believe

that this masterpiece by Molière, perhaps superior to its century by several years, must fear the equivocal fate that it had at its birth. Our audience, subtler and more enlightened than it was sixty years ago, would no longer need the *Doctor in spite of Himself* in order to get to the *Misanthrope*. But at the same time I believe along with you, that other masterpieces of the same Poet and of several others, previously justly applauded, would have more esteem than success today. Our change of taste is the cause of this: we want more action in Tragedy, and more subtlety in Comedy. The reason for this, if I am not deceived, is that the ordinary subjects are almost entirely exhausted in the two Theaters; on the one side more motion is needed to interest us in less well known heroes, and on the other more refinement and more nuance to make less obvious absurdities felt.

The zeal with which you are animated against Comedy does not permit you to pardon any genre, even the one in which they propose to make our tears flow by means of interesting situations, and to offer us models of courage and virtue in ordinary life. *One might as well,* you say, *go to a sermon.*[20] This speech surprises me from your mouth. A moment before you claimed that the lessons of Tragedy are useless for us because it puts on the Stage only heroes whom we cannot flatter ourselves at resembling; and at present you blame pieces in which there are exposed to our eyes only our citizens and those like us. You do not attack this genre as pernicious to good morals, but as insipid and boring. Say, Sir, if you wish, that it is the most easygoing of all, but do not seek to take away from it the right to make us tender; on the contrary it seems to me that no genre of piece is more fit for this; and if I am allowed to judge the impression of other people from my own, I admit that I am even more touched by the scenes full of pathos of the *Prodigal Son*[21] than by the tears of *Andromache* and *Iphigenia*. Princes and grandees are too far from us for us to take the same interest in their setbacks as in our own. We see, so to speak, the misfortunes of Kings only in perspective; and, in order to console us, at the very time at which we pity them an inchoate feeling seems to tell us that these misfortunes are the price of supreme greatness, and are the stages by which nature brings Princes close to other men. But the ills of private life do not at all have this resource to offer us; they are the faithful image of the troubles that afflict us or that menace us. A King is almost not our fellow man, and the fate of those like us has many more rights to our tears.

What does appear blameworthy to me in this genre, or rather in the manner in which our Poets have treated it, is the bizarre mixture they have almost always made of pathos and humor; two such violently

contrasting and disparate feelings are not made to be neighbors; and although in life there might be some bizarre circumstances in which one laughs and cries at the same time, I ask whether all these circumstances of life are fit to be represented on the Stage, and whether the *mixed-up* and poorly settled feeling that results from this combination of laughter with tears is preferable to the pleasure of crying by itself, or even to the pleasure of laughing by itself? *Men are all made of iron!* cries the prodigal Son, after having made to his valet the odious depiction of the ingratitude and harshness of his former friends; *and the women?* the valet answers him, which only wishes to make the audience laugh. I dare to invite the illustrious Author of that piece to cut these three words, which are there only to disfigure a masterpiece. It seems to me that they must produce upon all people of taste the same effect as a shrill and discordant sound that makes itself heard suddenly in the middle of some touching music.

After having said so much that is bad about Spectacles, there was nothing more left for you, Sir, than to also declare yourself against the persons who perform them and against those who, according to you, attract us there; and you fully acquit yourself of this by the manner in which you treat Actors and women. Your Philosophy spares no one, and this passage from Scripture, *et manus ejus contra omnes* could be applied to it.[22]

According to you, the habit Actors have of taking on a character that is not their own, accustoms them to falsity. I cannot believe that this reproach is serious. On the same principle, you would make the charge against all the Authors of Theatrical pieces who are even much more obligated than the Actor to transform themselves into the characters they have to make speak on the stage. You add that it is base to expose oneself to hisses for money. What must be concluded from this? That the station of the Actor is the one among all in which it is the least permitted to be mediocre. But in recompense, what applause more flattering than that of the Theater? It is there where amour-propre cannot cause any illusion for itself either about success, or about failures; and why would we refuse an Actor who is welcomed and desired by the public the right—so just and so noble—of drawing his subsistence from his talent? I say nothing about what you add, doubtless to make a joke, that by practicing stealing skillfully on the Stage valets teach themselves how to steal in houses and on the streets.[23]

Superior, as you are, by your character and your reflections to all sorts of prejudices, was that one, Sir, that you should have preferred to subject yourself to and to defend? How have you not felt that if those who perform our pieces deserve to be dishonored, those who compose them also

would deserve to be so too; and that by raising the latter and debasing the former this way, we have been very inconsistent and very barbaric at the same time? The Greeks have been less so than we have, and it is not at all necessary to look for other causes for the esteem in which good Actors were held among them. They had consideration for Esopus for the same reason they admired Euripides and Sophocles.[24] The Romans, it is true, thought differently, but among them Drama was played by slaves. Occupied by great objects, they did not wish to employ anyone but slaves for their pleasures.

The chastity of Actresses, I agree with you, is exposed to more risks than that of women of high society; but their glory for triumphing ought to be greater. It is not rare to see some who resist for a long time, and it would be more common to find some who resisted forever, if they were not discouraged as it were from continence by the little real consideration they draw from it. The surest way of vanquishing passions is to combat them with vanity. Let distinctions be granted to well-behaved Actresses, and this will be, I dare to predict, the ordination of the most severe condition in morals. But if they see that, on the one hand, no one is grateful to them from depriving themselves of lovers, and that, on the other, high-society women are allowed to have them without being less well thought of for it, how would they not seek their consolation in the pleasures they would prohibit themselves at a pure loss?

At least you are, Sir, more just or more consistent than the public; your outburst on our Actresses merits a very violent one on other women. I do not know whether you are among the small number of wise men they sometimes have been able to make unhappy, and if by the ill that you say about them, you wished to pay them back for that which they have done to you. Nevertheless I doubt that your eloquent censure will make many enemies for you among them. Through your reproaches is seen to pierce the very pardonable taste that you have preserved for them, perhaps even something more lively; this mixture of severity and weakness—excuse me for this last word—will get you pardoned easily; they will feel at least, and they will be grateful to you for it, that it cost you less to declaim against them with warmth, than to see and judge them with a philosophic indifference. But how could one unite that indifference with the so seductive feeling that they inspire? Who can have the good fortune or ill fortune of speaking about them without interest? Nevertheless, let us try, in order to appreciate them with justice, without adulation as without ill-humor, to forget at that moment how lovable and dangerous their society is; let us reread Epictetus before writing, and hold ourselves firm in order to be austere and serious.

I shall not examine at all, sir, whether you are right to cry out *Where will an agreeable and virtuous woman be found?*[25] as the wise man formerly cried, *Where will a strong woman be found?* The human race would be very much to be pitied if the object most worthy of our homage were in fact as rare as you say. But if unfortunately you were right, what would be the sad cause of it? The slavery and the sort of debasement into which we have put women; the shackles that we give to their mind and their soul; the jargon—futile and humiliating for them and for us—to which we have reduced our commerce with them; as if they did not have a reason to cultivate or were not worthy of it; finally the fatal—I would say almost murderous—education that we prescribe to them without permitting them to have any other; an education in which they learn almost solely how to counterfeit themselves ceaselessly, not to have a feeling that they do not stifle, an opinion they do not hide, a thought they do not disguise. We treat nature in them as we treat it in our gardens, we seek to ornament it while stifling it. If the majority of Nations have acted like us with respect to them, it is because everywhere men have been the stronger, and everywhere the stronger is the oppressor of the weaker. I do not know whether I am mistaken, but it seems to me that the distance we keep women from everything that can enlighten them and raise up their soul is very capable of flattering their amour-propre by troubling their vanity. One would say that we feel their advantages, and that we wanted to keep them from profiting from them. We cannot dissimulate from ourselves that in works of taste and pleasure they succeed better than we do, above all in those in which feeling and tenderness ought to be the soul; for when you say that *they do not know how to describe nor to feel even love*,[26] you must never have read the *Letters of Héloïse*, or you must have read them in some Poet who spoiled them.[27] I admit that this talent of depicting love in its nature, a talent suited to a time of ignorance, in which nature alone gave lessons, can be weakened in our age, and that women—by following our example having become more coquettish than passionate—will soon be able to love as little as we can and also to speak about it badly; but will that be nature's fault? With regard to works of genius and sagacity, a thousand examples prove to us that the weakness of the body is not a great obstacle to them in men; why then wouldn't a more solid and virile education put women within reach of succeeding in them? Descartes judged them fitter than us for Philosophy, and an unfortunate Princess was his most illustrious disciple.[28] More inexorable toward them, you will treat them, Sir, like those vanquished but redoubtable people whose conquerors disarm them; and after having maintained that the cultivation of the mind is pernicious to the virtue of men, you

conclude from this that it would be even more so to that of women. It seems to me on the contrary that since men ought to be more virtuous in proportion as they know better the genuine sources of their happiness, the human race ought to gain by being instructed. If enlightened ages are not less corrupt than the other, it is because in them enlightenment is too unequally spread out; because it is compressed and concentrated in too small a number of minds; because the beams that escape them into the people have enough strength to demonstrate to ordinary souls the attraction and advantages of love, and not to make them see its dangers and horror. The great defect of this philosophic century is not to be enough so. But when enlightenment is freer to spread itself out, more extended and more equal, we shall then feel its beneficent effects; we shall cease to hold women under the yoke and in ignorance, and they will cease seducing, deceiving, and governing their masters. At that time love will be between the two sexes what the sweetest and truest friendship is between virtuous men; or rather it will be an even more delightful feeling, the complement and the perfection of friendship; a feeling that according to nature's intention ought to render us happy and that for our unhappiness we have been able to adulterate and corrupt.

Finally, let us not stop, Sir, only at the advantages that society could draw from the education of women; let us have more humanity and the justice of not refusing them what sweetens life for them as for us. We have experienced so many times how suited the cultivation of the mind and the exercise of talents are to distracting us from our ills, and to consoling us in our troubles: why refuse to the most lovable half of the human race—destined to share with us the unhappiness of being—the relief most suited to make it bear unhappiness? Philosophers, whom nature has scattered over the surface of the earth, it is up to you to destroy, if you are able, such a fatal prejudice. It is up to those among you who experience the sweetness or the distress of being fathers, to dare to be the first to shake off the yoke of a barbaric practice, by giving to their daughters the same education as to their other children. Let them learn only from you, in receiving that precious education, to look at it solely as a preventative against idleness, a fortification against unhappiness, and not as the nourishment of a vain curiosity, and the subject of a frivolous ostentation. That is all that you owe and all they owe to public opinion, which can condemn them to appear ignorant, but not force them to be so. So often you have been seen, for very slight motives, out of vanity or ill-humor, to clash head-on against the ideas of your age; for what greater interest could you defy it, than for the advantage of what should be dearest to you in the world, to make life less bitter to those who possess it

from you, and whom nature has destined to survive you and to suffer; to procure for them in misfortune, in maladies, in poverty, in old age, some resources of which our injustice has deprived them? Women are commonly regarded, Sir, as very sensitive and very weak; I believe them to be on the contrary either less sensitive or less weak than we are. Without strength of body, without talents, without study that could extricate them from their troubles and make them forget them for several moments, they swallow them, and sometimes know how to hide them better than we do;. This firmness presupposes in them, either a soul hardly susceptible to deep impressions, or a courage the idea of which we do not have. How many cruel situations are there that men resist only by the whirlwind of occupation that sweeps them away? Would the distresses of women be less penetrating and less lively than ours? They ought not to be so. Their troubles ordinarily come from the heart; ours often have nothing but vanity and ambition as principle. But these alien feelings, which education has carried into our soul, which habit has engraved there, and which example fortifies there, become, to the shame of humanity, more powerful over us than natural feelings; pain causes more ousted government ministers to perish than unhappy lovers.

There, Sir, if I had to plead the case of women, is what I would dare to say in their favor. I would defend them less concerning what they are than concerning what they could be. I would not praise them at all by maintaining along with you that shame is natural to them; that would claim that nature has not given them either needs, or passions. Reflection can repress desires, but the first movement, which is the one from nature, induces one to abandon oneself to them. Thus I shall limit myself to agreeing that society and laws have made shame necessary for women; and if I ever write a Book on the power of education, this shame will be its first chapter. But while appearing less predisposed than you for the modesty of their sex, I shall be more favorable to their preservation; and in spite of the good opinion that you have of the bravery of a regiment of women, I shall not believe that the principal way of making them useful would be to destine them to recruit our troops.[29]

But I notice, sir, and I fear very much to have noticed it too late, that the pleasure of conversing with you, the justification of women, and perhaps that secret interest that always seduces us for them, has dragged me too far and for too long a time away from my subject. That is enough, and perhaps too much, about the part of your Letter that concerns Spectacles in themselves, and the dangers of every sort for which you make them responsible. Nothing will be able to injure them any more if your Writing does not succeed in it; for it must be admitted that none of our

Preachers has combated them with as much force and subtlety as you have. It is true that the superiority of your talents alone ought not to have the honor for it. In attacking Drama the majority of our Christian Orators condemn what they do not know; you on the contrary have studied, analyzed, composed yourself, in order to judge better the effects, the dangerous poison from which you seek to protect us; and you disparage our pieces of Theater with the advantage of not only having seen them, but of having composed them. Nevertheless this very advantage forms an inconvenient objection against you that you appear to have felt while not daring to make it to yourself, and to which you have indirectly attempted to respond. According to you Spectacles are necessary in a City as corrupt as the one in which you lived for a long time; and it is apparently for its perverse inhabitants, for it is certainly not for your fatherland, that your pieces were composed. That is to say, sir, that you have treated us like those expiring animals, whom one finishes off in their illnesses for fear of seeing them suffer for too long. Haven't enough others taken this care without you; and hasn't your delicacy anything to reproach itself for with regard to us? I fear it all the more since the talent you have shown for lyric Theater in such happy attempts, as a Musician and as a Poet, is at least as suited for making partisans in favor of Spectacles as your eloquence is for depriving Spectacles of them. The pleasure of reading you will not harm that of listening to you; and for a long time you will have the sorrow of seeing the *Village Soothsayer* destroy all the good that your writings against Drama would have been able to do for us.

It remains for me to say a word to you about the two other points of your Letter, and in the first place about the reasons that you bring to bear against the establishment of a Dramatic Theater at Geneva. This part of your work, I must admit, is the one that has found the fewest contradictors at Paris. Very indulgent toward ourselves, we look at Spectacles as a nourishment necessary for our frivolity, but we willingly decide that Geneva ought not to have any at all; as long as our rich lazy people go to the Theater every day to relieve themselves from the weight of the time that crushes them for three hours, it hardly matters to them whether anyone amuses themselves elsewhere; because God—to make use of one of your happiest expressions—has endowed them with a most meritorious gentleness with which they are able to support the misfortunes of others.[30] But I doubt that the Genevans, who take a little more interest than we do in what concerns them, applaud your severity the same way. It is in accordance with a desire that appeared to me almost general in your fellow citizens that I proposed the establishment of a Theater in their City, and I can hardly believe that they will abandon themselves to

the amusements that you substitute for it with as much pleasure. I am even assured that several of these amusements, even as simple proposals, already alarm your grave Ministers; that they protest above all against the dances that you want to put in the place of Drama, and that it appears even more dangerous to them to present oneself as a spectacle than to attend one.

Moreover, it is up to your compatriots alone to judge about what can be useful or harmful in this sort of thing. If they fear the effects and consequences of Drama on their morals, what I have already said in its favor will not make them determine to accept it, just as everything that you say against it will not make them reject it if they imagine that it can be of some advantage to them. Thus I shall satisfy myself with examining in a few words the reasons that you bring up against the establishment of a Theater in Geneva and I submit this examination to the judgment and decision of the Genevans.

First you transport yourself into the mountains of the Valais, into the center of a little country of which you write a charming description; you show us what is perhaps found only in this corner of the Universe alone, people who are quiet and satisfied in the bosom of their family and their labor; and you prove that Drama would not be fit for anything but disturbing the happiness they enjoy. No one, sir, will claim the contrary, men fortunate enough to satisfy themselves with the pleasures offered by nature ought not to substitute others for them; the amusements one seeks after are the slow poison of the simple amusements, and it is a general law not to undertake to change the good into the better. What will you conclude from this for Geneva? Is the present state of this Republic susceptible to the application of these rules? I want to believe that there is nothing exaggerated or romantic in the description of this fortunate canton of the Valais, where there is neither hatred, nor jealousy, nor quarrels, and where nevertheless there are men. But if the golden age has taken refuge in the rocks near Geneva, your Citizens are at least in the silver age; and in the little time that I passed among them, they appeared to me advanced enough, or if you wish perverted enough, to be able to hear *Brutus* or *Rome Saved* without having to fear becoming worse from it.

The strongest of all your objections against the establishment of a Theater in Geneva is the impossibility of supporting that expense in a small City. Nevertheless you can remember, that several years ago when particular circumstances obliged your Magistrates to permit a public spectacle in the very City of Geneva, the inconvenience in question was not perceived at all, nor were any of those that you cause to be feared. Still if it were true that the daily receipts were not enough for the upkeep

of the theater, I beg you to observe that the City of Geneva is one of the richest of Europe in proportion to its size; and I have reason to believe that numerous opulent Citizens of that City, who would desire to have a Theater there, would provide a part of the expense without difficulty; at least it seemed to me that many of them were of that disposition, and it is in consequence that I chanced the proposal that alarms you. That presupposed, it would be easy to respond to your objections in two words. I did not claim that there would be a spectacle every day at Geneva; one or two days a week would be enough for that amusement, and one could take for one of those days the one in which the people are at rest; thus on the one hand labor would not be slowed at all, on the other the troupe could be less numerous, and consequently less burdensome to the City. The winter alone would be devoted to the Drama, the summer to the pleasures of the country, and to the military exercises about which you speak. I also find it hard to believe that one could not remedy the alarm of your Ministers about the conduct of the Actors by means of severe laws in a State as small as that of Geneva, in which the vigilant eye of the Magistrates can reach from one border to the other at the same moment, in which legislation takes in all parties at once, in which finally it is so rigorous and so well executed against the disorders of streetwalkers, and even against hidden dissipations. I say as much about the sumptuary laws the execution of which is always easy to maintain in a small State: moreover even vanity will hardly be concerned with violating them because they oblige all Citizens equally, and because at Geneva men are not judged either by wealth or by clothes. In sum, nothing, it seems to me, would suffer in your fatherland from the establishment of a Theater, not even the drunkenness of the men and the gossip of the women, both of which find so much favor with you. But if the suppression of these two last points would produce, to speak your language, *a weakening of the state,*[31] I would be of the opinion that one could be consoled for this misfortune. Nothing less than a Philosopher practiced in paradoxes like you was needed to maintain to us that there is less evil in getting drunk and gossiping than in seeing *Cinna* and *Polyeuctes* presented. Here I am speaking in accordance with the depiction you yourself made of the daily life of your citizens, for I am not unaware that they protest strongly against that depiction. They say that the short stay that you made among them did not leave you the time to become acquainted with them, or to frequent the different classes enough; and you have represented as the general spirit of that wise Republic what is at most only the obscure and despised vice of some private societies.

Furthermore, you ought not to be unaware, Sir, that for two years a

troupe of Actors has been established at the gates of Geneva, and that Geneva and the Actors find themselves wondrously from it. Decide with courage, the circumstance is urgent and the case difficult. Corruption for corruption, the one that will leave the Genevans with the money that they need is preferable to the one that makes it leave them.

I hasten to finish with this point, about which the majority of our Readers are hardly troubled, to come to another that concerns them even less, and upon which I will pause even less for that reason. This is the sentiments that I attribute to your Ministers in matters of Religion. You know, and they know it even better than you do, that my design was not at all to offend them; and this motive alone would be enough today to make me sensitive to their complaints and circumspect in my justification. I would be very grieved at the suspicion of having *violated their secret*,[32] above all if this suspicion came from your side; permit me to make you notice that the enumeration of the means from which you suppose that I could have judged about their doctrine is not complete. If I am mistaken in the exposition that I made of their sentiments, in accordance with their works, in accordance with some *public* conversations in which they did not appear to me to take much interest in the *Trinity* or in *Hell,* finally in accordance with the opinion of their fellow citizens, and of the other reformed Churches, all besides me, I dare to say it, would be mistaken as well. These sentiments are, moreover, a necessary consequence of the principles of the Protestant Religion; and if your Ministers do not judge it fitting to adopt them or to avow them today, the logic with which I am acquainted in them ought naturally to lead them there, or will leave them halfway there. If they are not *Socinians*, they must become so, not for the honor of their Religion, but for that of their Philosophy. This word *Socinians* ought not to frighten you; my design was not at all to give a *name of a sect*[33] to men about whom I elsewhere made a just praise; but to set forth by means of a single word what I believed to be their doctrine, and what will infallibly be their *public* doctrine in several years. With regard to their Profession of Faith, I limit myself to sending you back to it and to making you its judge. You admit that you have not read it, that was perhaps the safest way to be as satisfied with it as you appear to be. Do not take this invitation at all for a stroke of satire against your Ministers; they themselves ought not to be offended by it; in matters of profession of faith a Catholic is allowed to show himself to be hard to please without Christians of a contrary Communion being able to be legitimately wounded by it. The Roman Church has an established language about the divinity of the Word, and obliges us pitilessly to regard as Arians all those who do not use this language. Your Pastors will say

that they do not acknowledge the Roman Church as their judge; but they apparently will tolerate my regarding it as mine. By means of this accommodation we shall be reconciled with each other and I shall tell the truth without offending them. What does surprise me, Sir, is that men who give themselves out as zealous defenders of the truths of the *Catholic* Religion, who often see impiety and scandal where there is not even the appearance of them, who on these matters pride themselves on understanding subtlety and not understanding reason at all, and who have *read* this Profession of Faith of Geneva, have been as satisfied with it as you are, to the point of believing themselves even obliged to praise it. But it was a question of rendering my probity and my religion suspect at the same time; everything was good for them in this design; and it was not the Ministers of Geneva they wished to harm. However that may be, I do not know whether the Genevan Ecclesiastics whom you wanted to justify concerning their belief, will be much more satisfied with you than they have been with me, and if your laxity in defending them will please them more than my frankness. You seem to accuse me almost solely of *imprudence* with regard to them; you reproach me for not having praised them at all in their manner, but in mine, and elsewhere you show enough indifference concerning this Socinianism about which they are so afraid of being suspected. Permit me to doubt that this manner of pleading their case satisfies them. Nevertheless, I would not be at all surprised by it, when I see the extraordinary welcome that the pious have given your work. The strictness of the morality that you preach has made them indulgent about the tolerance that you profess with courage and without roundabout means. Should they be honored for it, or you, or perhaps the unexpected progress of Philosophy in the very minds who appear the least susceptible to it? My article *Geneva* has not received the same welcome from them as your Letter has; our Priests have almost made the heterodox sentiments that I attribute to their enemies into a crime in me. That is what neither you nor I would have foreseen; but whoever writes ought to expect such slight injustices, and to be happy if they do not suffer any more serious ones.

I am, with all the respect that your virtue and your talents deserve, and with more truth than the Philinte of Molière,

SIR,

Your very humble and very obedient servant,

D'ALEMBERT.

"Response to the Anonymous Letter Written by Members of the Legal Profession"

I[1] am grateful for the attentions with which these Gentlemen with whom I am not at all acquainted honor me;[2] but I must respond in my own manner; for I have only a single one.

Some members of the legal profession who esteem etc. M. R., have been surprised and distressed by his opinion in his letter to M. d'Alembert about the Tribunal of the Marshals of France . . .[3]

I believed I said some useful truths. It is sad that such truths surprise, sadder that they distress, and much sadder still that they distress members of the legal profession.

A Citizen as enlightened as M. R.

I am not an enlightened Citizen, but only a Zealous Citizen.

Is not unaware that one cannot justly unveil faults of Legislation to the eyes of the nation.

I was unaware of it; I am learning it, but permit me a little question in my turn. Bodin, Loisel, Fénelon, Boulainvilliers, the Abbé de St. Pierre, the Président de Montesquieu, the Marquis de Mirabeau, the Abbé de Mabli,[4] all good Frenchmen and enlightened people, have they been unaware that one cannot justly unveil faults of legislation to the eyes of the Nation? One is wrong to demand that a Foreigner be more learned than they are about what is just or unjust in their country.

One cannot justly unveil faults of Legislation to the eyes of the nation.

This maxim can have a particular and circumscribed application in accordance with places and persons, but this is perhaps the first time that justice has been opposed to the truth.

One cannot justly unveil faults of legislation to the eyes of the nation.

If one of our Citizens dared to make such a speech to me at Geneva, I would take criminal action against him, as a traitor to the fatherland.

One cannot justly unveil faults of legislation to the eyes of the Nation.

There is something in the application of this maxim that I do not understand at all. J. J. Rousseau Citizen of Geneva publishes a Book in Holland, and behold, they tell him in France that one cannot justly unveil faults of legislation to the eyes of the Nation! To me this appears bizarre. Gentlemen, I do not have the honor of being your compatriot; it is not at

all for you that I am writing; I do not publish at all in your country; I do not concern myself at all about my book arriving there; it is not my fault if you read me.

One cannot justly unveil faults of Legislation to the eyes of the nation.

What then! As soon as someone has made a bad institution in some corner of the world, from that moment the whole universe must respect it in silence? It will no longer be allowed for anyone to tell other peoples that they would do badly by imitating it? These are rather new claims, and an extremely singular international law.

Philosophers are made to enlighten the Minister, to open his eyes about his errors, and to respect his faults.

I do not know what philosophers are made for, nor do I concern myself with knowing it.

To enlighten the Minister.

I do not know whether one can enlighten the Minister.

To open his eyes about his errors.

I do not know whether one can open the Minister's eyes about his errors.

And to respect his faults.

I do not know whether one can respect the Minister's faults.

I know nothing about what regards the Minister; because this word is not known in my country and it might have a meaning that I do not understand.

Moreover, M. R. does not appear to us to reason as a political thinker.[5]

This term sounds too high for me. I try to reason as a good Citizen of Geneva. That is all.

when he allows in a state an Authority superior to the sovereign Authority.

I allow only three of them. First, the authority of God, and then that of the natural law that derives from the constitution of man, and then that of honor stronger over a decent heart than all the Kings on the earth.

Or at least independent of it.

Not only independent, but superior. If the sovereign authority*[6] could ever be in conflict with one of the three preceding, the former would have to give way in that. The blasphemer Hobbes is held in horror for having maintained the opposite.

At this moment he does not recall Grotius's sentiment.

I could not recall what I have never known, and I probably never shall know what I do not concern myself at all with learning.

*We might very well not be understanding each other about the sense we give to this word, and as it is not good that we understand each other better, we shall do well not to dispute about it.

Adopted by the Encyclopedists.

The sentiment of any one of the Encyclopedists is not a rule for his colleagues. The common authority is that of reason. I do not acknowledge any other.

The Encyclopedists his colleagues.

The friends of the truth are all my colleagues.

Time prevents from setting forth several other objections.

Perhaps duty would prevent me from resolving them. I know the obedience and respect that I owe in my actions and in my speeches to the laws and the maxims of the country in which I have the happiness to live. But it does not follow from this that I ought to write to the Genevans only what suits Parisians.

That would require a conversation.

I would not say any more about it in conversation than by writing; I owe an account of my maxims only to God and the Council of Geneva.

That would deprive M. Rousseau of time precious for him and for the public.

My time is useless to the public and is no longer of much value for me. But I do need it to earn my bread; that is the reason that I seek solitude.

J. J. Rousseau

From Montmorency October 15, 1758

THE ANSWER TO HIS RESPONSE

Just as M. Rousseau loves Solitude, the members of the legal profession with whom he has dealt love obscurity; perhaps they would do even better to love Silence, nevertheless they cannot be sorry for having presented their reflections to M. Rousseau because they earned them a response. They are satisfied and grateful for it, it has strengthened them in the Feelings of which they have already assured him, admiration for his genius, esteem for his morals, respect for his voluntary poverty.

This October 18, 1758.

Letter from Julien-David Leroy to Rousseau

[End of October 1758].

Sir

Although I do not have The honor of being acquainted with you,[1] I am persuaded that you will not be annoyed with me for sharing with you an observation that I have made about your last work. I read it with the greatest pleasure, and I found that, in it, you established your opinion very forcefully; but I shall admit to you that, having traveled throughout Greece and having made a particular study of the Theaters that one still finds in the ruins of its ancient cities, I read with surprise in your Book, p. 142 the passage that follows. "With all of this, never was Greece, Sparta excepted, cited as an example of good morals; and Sparta, *which tolerated no Theater,* was not concerned with honoring those who appeared in it."[2] Not only was there a theater in Sparta, absolutely similar to the one of Bacchus at Athens, but it was the finest ornament of that city so celebrated for the courage of its inhabitants. It even still exists in large part, and Pausanias and Plutarch speak of it: it is following what these two Authors say about it that I have written Its history which I send to you, in The Work that I have just brought out.[3] Since this error that slipped by you might be noticed by other people than myself, I believed that you would not be angry at me for notifying you of it, and I flatter myself, Sir, that you will want to receive this feeble notice as a mark of The esteem and of the perfect consideration with which I have the honor of being your very humble and Obedient servant.

Le Roy.

From Rousseau to Leroy

Montmorency, November 4, 1758

I thank you, Sir, for your kindness in notifying me about my blunder on the subject of the theater at Sparta, and for the decency with which you wanted to give me this notice. I am So Grateful for this action, that I ask you for permission to make use of your Letter in another edition of my own.[1] I come very close to congratulating myself for an error that has drawn to me this mark of esteem from you, and I feel less ashamed of my mistake than proud of your correction.

This, Sir, is what happens when one trusts famous authors. I hardly consult them with impunity; and, in one way or another, they rarely fail to punish me for my trust. The Learned Cragius,[2] so well-versed in antiquity, had said the thing before me, and Plutarch himself affirms that the Lacedaemonians did not go to the Drama at all, out of fear of hearing things contrary to the laws, either seriously or in jest. It is true that elsewhere the same Plutarch says the opposite; and he happens to contradict Himself So Often, that one ought not to advance anything following him Without having read him entirely. However that might be, I cannot nor do I want to challenge your testimony; and if these Authors Were not given the lie by the remnants of the theater at Sparta still in existence, they would be by Pausanias, Eustathius, Suidas, Athenaeus, and other ancients. It appears only that this theater was dedicated to Games, dances, Music competitions rather than to normal representations, and that the pieces they played there sometimes were less genuine Dramas than coarse farces, suitable to the Simplicity of the Spectators; which did not prevent Sosybius Lacon from writing a treatise on these sorts of shows. It is La Guilletière[3] who teaches me all that; for I do not have the Books to verify it. Thus nothing is lacking in my mistake, in this occasion, but the vanity of refusing to recognize it.

Moreover, far from Wishing that this mistake remain hidden to my Readers, I shall be very glad that it be published, and that they Be informed of it; this will always be one error less. Furthermore, as it harms no one but myself, and my Sentiment is not less well established because of it, I hope that it will be able to Serve for the amusement of the Critics:

I prefer that they exult over my ignorance rather than my maxims; and I shall always be very content that the useful truths that I have upheld be spared at my expense.

Receive, Sir, the assurances of my gratitude, my esteem, and my respect.

J.-J. Rousseau

Notes

Collected Writings Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *Collected Writings of Rousseau,* Volumes I–IX. Edited by Roger D. Masters and Christopher Kelly. Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1991–.

Emile Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *Emile, or On Education.* Edited by Allan Bloom. New York: Basic Books, 1979.

EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

1. *Collected Writings,* V, 237.

2. The best accounts of the argument of the *Letter* are Allan Bloom's introduction to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Politics and the Arts: Letter to M. d'Alembert on the Theatre* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1960), xv–xxxviii; Patrick Coleman, *Rousseau's Political Imagination: Rule and Representation in the "Lettre à d'Alembert* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1984); and Ourida Mostefai, *Le Citoyen de Genève et la République des lettres* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003).

3. See below, 353.

4. See below, 245.

5. See below, 356.

6. See below, 373.

7. See below, 373.

8. "Letter au Doctor Pansophe," in *Mélanges de Voltaire* (Paris: Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1961), 850–851.

9. *Collected Writings,* II, 188–189.

10. Ibid., 189.

11. For an excellent development of this part of Rousseau's argument, see Allan Bloom's introduction to *Politics and the Arts.*

12. See below, 294. See "Preface to *Narcissus,*" *Collected Writings,* II, 196–197.

13. *Collected Writings,* VI, 3.

14. *Collected Writings,* V, 100.

15. Ibid., 247.

16. Ibid., 247 and 280.

17. See below, 33.

18. When Rousseau says in the *Letter to d'Alembert* that he followed the theater for ten years, "good and bad days alike," he is not overstating (320 below).

19. See *Confessions, Collected Writings,* V, 288.

20. Ibid., 280.

21. Ibid., 281.

22. For an interesting account of Rousseau's understanding of genius as mark-

ing a decisive transition in the history of music, see Karl Barth, *Protestant Thought from Rousseau to Ritschl*, 46–51 and 60–62. An overview of Rousseau's musical writings can be found in John T. Scott's introduction to *Collected Writings,* VII, xiii–xliv.

23. *Confessions, Collected Writings,* V, 281.

24. *Confessions* in *Collected Writings,* V, 325.

25. See below, 285.

26. *Collected Writings,* V, 331.

27. For an elaboration of this treatment of *The Death of Lucretia,* see Christopher Kelly, *Rousseau as Author: Consecrating One's Life to the Truth* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

28. See below, 362.

29. See below, 337.

30. The best accounts of Rousseau on love are Allan Bloom, *Love and Friendship* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993) and Claude Habib, *Le Consentement amoureux* (Paris: Hachette, 1998). For an excellent comprehensive account of relations between men and women in Rousseau's thought, see Joel Schwartz, *The Sexual Politics of Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984). A recent treatment focusing on the *Letter to d'Alembert* is Elizabeth Rose Wingrove, *Rousseau's Republican Romance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). Wingrove also provides a useful bibliography containing references to most of the important feminist treatments of Rousseau on women.

31. *Emile,* 329.

32. See below, 311.

33. This point is made by Paul de Man in *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 160–187. For a somewhat different reading of the play made in response to de Man, see John C. O'Neal, "Myth, Language, and Perception in Rousseau's *Narcisse,*" in *Theatre Journal* 37, no. 2 (May 1985):192–202.

34. See below, 150.

35. See below, 157.

36. See below, 158.

37. This point is made by d'Alembert, below, 358.

38. See below, 268.

39. See below, 308.

40. See below, 339.

41. For an account of some of the complexity of Rousseau's view of the political uses of theater, see David Marshall, *The Surprising Effects of Sympathy: Marivaux, Diderot, Rousseau, and Mary Shelley* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 135–177.

42. A well-argued example of this position is Zev Trachtenberg, *Making Citizens: Rousseau's Political Theory of Culture,* London: Routledge, 1993), 175–210.

43. See below, 346–348 and 351.

44. See below, 351.

45. See below, 324.

46. See below, 378.

47. See below, 309.

48. See below, 368. Rousseau concedes the truth of at least a part of d'Alembert's claim that his attack on actors was not serious. See below, 310.

49. See below, 189.

50. See below, 230.

51. See below, 232.

52. See below, 236.

53. Quoted in Jean Starobinski, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Transparency and Obstruction,* trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 72.

54. It is significant that Emile falls in love with an image that has flaws built in so that it can correspond to a real woman. Pygmalion is more like the false Sophie who falls in love with the hero of Fénelon's novel *Telemachus* and who dies because she cannot find such a hero in the world. See *Emile,* 403–404.

55. See below, 348.

56. Quoted in Starobinski, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau,* 71.

IPHIS

1. In the manuscript Rousseau notes, "Look this name up in the dictionary, for it is not Micénes nor Mitilene.

2. The King who is speaking and Anaxarette's deceased father are both named Ortule.

3. The manuscript ends here. The 1776 edition ends with the preceding verse.

THE DISCOVERY OF THE NEW WORLD

1. In the edition of 1776 Carime is designated only as an "American Princess"; Alvar, as a "Castillan Officer"; the High Priest, as "The High Priest of the Americans"; and Nozime, as an "American."

2. In the edition of 1776, this line and the three preceding ones read "Band of American Makers of Sacrifices, Band of Spanish Men and Women of the Fleet, Band of American Men and Women."

3. This is the island on which Columbus landed on October 12, 1492.

4. The two jealous sisters are presumably Asia and America. The Pléiade editors suggest that "today" should read "formerly" (Pléiade, II, 1838 n. 1 to 815).

5. Rousseau gives a more favorable account of Corsica's barbarism in the *Social Contract* (*Collected Writings,* IV, 162).

6. The edition of 1776 says "these fatal moments."

7. These two verses are not in the edition of 1776.

8. Carime adopts the familiar second person here.

9. In the edition of 1776, these two lines read "But furies will obtain nothing / For a heart made like mine."

10. The edition of 1776 reads "this" rather than "the."

11. In the edition of 1776 the first seven lines of the scene are repeated with the fourth line reading "Gods reassure a people gone astray."

12. The edition of 1776 reads, "Tender wife, ah!"

13. In the edition of 1776 these five verses are replaced by:
Whatever the subject of their mortal terror,
Ah! Let us flee, dear spouse, let us flee; save our lives.
From a fear, alas, that threatens their courses,
My heart feels a real death.
14. In the edition of 1776 this line begins "I flee! Ah, Digizé."
15. In the edition of 1776 this line reads "But I still love my people as much as you."
16. There are numerous minor variants of this verse in different editions.
17. The edition of 1776 reads "in superb array."
18. The edition of 1776 reads "Their" rather than "These."
19. This verse and the next five are missing from the edition of 1776.
20. The addition of 1776 adds the following lines:
Will the most perfect love, legitimate ardor,
Have offended your eyes?
Ah! if such pure ardors are a crime before you,
Destroy the human race, and make none but Gods.
Heaven protector etc.
21. The edition of 1776 lists the characters for this scene as "The Cacique, the High Priest, Digizé, Band of Priests."
22. The edition of 1776 reads "in these places."
23. Here and in the reprises the edition of 1776 reads "Elder of the world, Being of days."
24. The edition of 1776 reads "That is enough of this."
25. This notation is not in the edition of 1776.
26. The edition of 1776 (erroneously) reads "The Cacique," rather than the direct address.
27. The edition of 1776 reads "lying Arts," rather than "lying Art."
28. In the edition of 1776, this reads "*The Priests retire, after which one hears the following Chorus backstage.*"
29. The edition of 1776 reads "What use are your efforts."
30. The edition of 1776 reads "one sees, in the recesses, the Spanish Fleet landing, to the sound of trumpets and Kettledrums."
31. The edition of 1776 reads "A Band of Spanish Men and Women."
32. The edition of 1776 reads "discovers a new world for us."
33. The edition of 1776 reads "holding a bared sword in one hand, and in the other the standard of Castille."
34. The edition of 1776 reads "eyes," instead of "games."
35. In the edition of 1776 these two verses read "Let us celebrate this great day of eternal memory, / Let our enchanting eyes shine in every direction."
36. The edition of 1776 reads "Castille" instead of "Iberia."
37. The edition of 1776 reads "Let him be put into chains."
38. The edition of 1776 reads "gentler," instead of "finer."
39. In the edition of 1776 these two verses read "The glory of a warrior is sufficiently satisfied / If he can foster a happy retirement."

40. In the edition of 1776 the last three verses read "Let us carry our Laws to the end of the Universe. / Today our audacity discovers a new world for us. / We are made to give it chains."

41. The edition of 1776 reads "Sire, I am still in ignorance."

42. In the edition of 1776 these lines read "I can have received them; / But where your presence shines."

43. In the edition of 1776 these two lines are replaced by "Here nothing but you should be adored. / We still aspire to the title of hero."

44. The edition of 1776 reads "I do not hear such"; later editions read "I do not expect such."

45. The edition of 1776 reads "coarse" rather than "sad."

46. The edition of 1776 reads "a gentler clime."

47. The edition of 1776 adds the line "I know the windings of these secret routes."

48. The edition of 1776 reads "believe," rather than "think."

49. The edition of 1776 reads "What monster could have made this reckless plan."

50. The edition of 1776 reads "is going," rather than "should."

51. The edition of 1776 reads "The Theater changes and represents."

52. The edition of 1776 reads "fatal fears."

53. The edition of 1776 reads "rough," rather than "sad."

54. The edition of 1776 reads "if it was he."

55. The edition of 1776 reads "Excuse two spouses."

56. The edition of 1776 reads "Encounter only."

57. The edition of 1776 reads "Will you not."

58. The edition of 1776 reads "They return his sword to him."

59. The edition of 1776 reads "I consider / Less their tears."

60. The edition of 1776 reads "my rebellious heart."

61. In the edition of 1776 this line reads "Come to form lovable games." Then it indicates the beginning of Scene V with the characters, "The preceding characters, Spanish and American people." Subsequently it omits the indication, "They dance."

62. None of Digizé's speech is in the edition of 1776.

THE PRISONERS OF WAR

1. Reading "crainte" where Pléiade reads "crinte" (Pléiade, II: 859).

2. The edition of 1782 reads "you are agreeing to."

THE RECKLESS PLEDGE

1. Following other editions, reading *Que si je ne pouvois autrement*, rather than *Que si je pouvais autrement* as in Pléiade.

2. In the original version the following verse did not occur and this one lacked a rhyme. Rousseau added it and it was inserted in the 1781 edition.

HARLEQUIN IN LOVE IN SPITE OF HIMSELF

1. This Latin expression (literally, "you too") had the colloquial sense of "difficulty." See Pléiade, II, 1854.
2. "Diable" was a colloquial expression for an empty purse. See Pléiade, II, 1855.
3. The word used by Nicaise here is *orion,* which is not a word in French. It is possible that it is "Orion," the mythological giant hunter who was turned into a constellation. In this case, Nicaise would be claiming to be a great fighter. In any event, it appears that Harlequin hears the word as *orillon,* which is an ear-shaped appendage, such as handles to a bowl. This would account for his reference to Nicaise's ears (*oreilles*) in his response.
4. "Aiuto" is Italian for "help."
5. An Italian oath, "by my blood."
6. Apparently Gracious has changed her name at this point.
7. A kind of sausage.
8. Japanese for "monks."
9. The manuscript breaks off here.

NARCISSUS

1. The important preface to this play can be found in *Collected Writings,* II, 186–198.
2. The term is *portrait ainsi travesti.* A "role travesti" in the theater is a female part played by a man or vice versa. "Travesti" can also have the sense of "parodied."
3. Passy is now a part of Paris. Rousseau often visited a relative there when it was a sort of suburban retreat.
4. This is a verse from Act I, scene vi of the opera *Atys* by Philippe Quinault and Jean-Baptiste Lully. In the opera, Atys is a devotee of the goddess Cybèle and believes himself, and is believed to be, immune to love. Nevertheless, he falls in love with Sangaride, is driven mad by Cybèle, kills Sangaride, and is turned into a tree before he can kill himself. Valére evidently enters singing, identifying with Atys at the point of the opera when he is still thought to be immune to love.
5. The expression, "pris sans verd" (literally, "caught without a green one") is from a game. Here it means "without a response."
6. The expression *courrir les champs* (to run through the fields) had the sense of going mad.
7. The key to this scene is that the word "personne" is a feminine word that can be applied to a male or a female person. For the rest of the scene Angélique replies using a feminine pronoun, but this has been authorized, as it were, by Valére's reference to a "person" rather than a woman. To convey this, the pronoun is replaced by "person" in the translation.
8. These were all real taverns.
9. Reading "faut-il" rather than "fait-il" as in Pléiade.

THE DEATH OF LUCRETIA

1. Instead of "she must bring," the edition of 1792 has "let her bring."

2. Instead of "it would be . . . unyielding Lucretius," the edition of 1792 has "it would be to offend your reason, not to say yourself. Your unyielding father."

3. Instead of "a Roman of the middle classes . . . aspire," the edition of 1792 has "Collatinus, a Roman of the middle classes, obtained the prize that Sextus had vainly flattered himself was his."

4. Instead of "I abandon . . . scruples." the edition of 1792 has "I do not dare speak to you of one who is more in love or more loveable."

5. Instead of "in spite . . . please you," the 1792 edition has "in spite of yourself, which of the two best deserved such a prize."

6. Instead of "what you prescribe to me," the edition of 1792 has "what you order me to believe."

7. Instead of "and whose judgments . . . very masters," the edition of 1792 has "and whose judgments are submitted to no one."

8. Instead of "and the people . . . you think," the edition of 1792 has "and your scruples should not be offended if the public finds it difficult to believe that you think."

9. Instead of "how badly . . . scorn," the edition of 1792 has "how badly does the people know men and how badly does it know [where] to place its esteem."

10. Instead of "such a secluded life," the edition of 1792 has "such a solitary and secluded life."

11. Instead of "it will at least . . . virtue," the edition of 1792 has "and I fear that you will be suspected of taking, against a speck of inclination, precautions little worthy of your great soul."

12. Instead of "here," the edition of 1792 has "in this setting."

13. Instead of "the impending . . . your spouse," the edition of 1792 has "the impending arrival of your spouse."

14. Instead of "to come see you," the edition of 1792 has "to come embrace you."

15. Instead of "the prince wished," the edition of 1792 has "the Prince Sextus wishes."

16. Instead of "you will tell," the edition of 1792 has "tell."

17. Instead of "leaves me no . . . or," the edition of 1792 has "does not permit me to act or."

18. The edition of 1792 adds the following passage:

(*Aside*).

> Gods who see my heart, illuminate my reason: act so that I do not cease to be virtuous. You know well that I want to be so, and I will always be so if you wish as I do.

19. Instead of "I entered her service," the edition of 1792 has "I entered her house."

20. Omitted in the edition of 1792.

21. Instead of "easily favor . . . desires," the edition of 1792 has "easily advance the prince's opinions."

22. Instead of "will you . . . believe," the edition of 1792 has "do you believe that I am duped by these lofty words? and have you forgotten that, according to me, *duty and virtue* are only specious traps by which adroit men cover their interests? *No one believes* in virtue, *but each one* would be very grateful were others to believe in it" (emphasis in text).

23. The edition of 1792 adds "in my observations."

24. The edition of 1792 has, instead, "ought to."

25. The edition of 1792 has, instead, "worthy"

26. The edition of 1792 has, instead, "appear suspect."

27. Instead of "the most dissimulated reserve," the edition of 1792 has "the most profound dissimulation."

28. Instead of "one time flattering her vanity . . . her amour-propre, I tried . . . her jealousy," the edition of 1792 has "one time flattering vanity . . . amour-propre, I tried one after the other her jealousy."

29. Instead of "arouses in her," the edition of 1792 has "has just aroused in her."

30. Instead of "his appearance must arouse in her," the edition of 1792 has "his appearance must have aroused in her before."

31. Instead of "may well have . . . Collatinus's letter," the edition of 1792 has "most likely . . . her husband's letter."

32. Instead of "to much . . . admit," the edition of 1792 has "I admit that my observations may deceive me."

33. The edition of 1792 adds "as well."

34. Instead of "we ought . . . us depends," the edition of 1792 has "we ought at least desire that the error is not on my side and foment or even ignite a love on which the happiness of our own depends."

35. The edition of 1792 has "Sextus's" instead.

36. In the edition of 1792, Pauline's speech begins as follows: "We ought to seek our advantages in the weaknesses of those whom we serve. I feel that all the more as, our union having been subjected to this price, my happiness depends on success." Then, as a new sentence, it continues, "But the interest . . ."

37. Instead of "I thought," the edition of 1792 has "I expected."

38. Instead of "after having taken note of," the edition of 1792 has "one barely notices."

39. Instead of "the orders . . . received," the edition of 1792 has "Lucretia's orders."

40. Instead of "I will be sure . . . secret," the edition of 1792 has "the first moment of freedom I have, I will be sure to alert you of it."

41. Instead of "again," the edition of 1792 has "I have told you, Sire."

42. Instead of "I do not know," the edition of 1792 has "I am not aware of."

43. In the edition of 1792, the scene ends with the following passage:

> Ah, Sire, might it please the heavens! but . . . Forgive me, if my anxious zeal gives me a lack of confidence that your courage disdains, but is useful for your security and perhaps for that of the state.
>
> SEXTUS.
>
> Friend, what vain cares! But if I might only see Lucretia, I am content to die at her feet; and let the whole universe perish!

SULPITIUS.

She uses all her wiles to avoid you. . . . However, you will see her. The moment has just been settled upon. In the name of the gods, go wait for her, and let me see to everything else.

The edition of 1792 then has two scenes that represent the dramatic continuation of this one, but are not found in the Neuchâtel manuscript:

SCENE [Ib].

SULPITIUS, *alone.*

Young fool! no one but you has lost his reason; and it is my misfortune to have my outcome depend upon yours. I absolutely must find out Brutus's intentions. A secret meeting to which Collatinus has been admitted gives me some hope of learning everything by means of this facile and limited man. I have already been able to gain his confidence. May he be the blind instrument of my plans; may I get wind of the plots I suspect by means of him; may he assist me in climbing to the highest degree of favor; may he unwittingly deliver his wife to the prince; may, finally, love—fatigued by possession—facilitate my pushing the husband aside, remaining alone master and favorite of Sextus, and subjecting one day in his name all the Romans to my rule.

SCENE [Ic].
PAULINE, SULPITIUS.

PAULINE.

No, Sulpitius, to no avail would I have spoken; she does not want to see the prince at all; and what she refused Collatinus's argument, she would not have accorded to the pretexts you suggested to me. Besides, each time I wanted to open my mouth, her presence inspired an invincible resistance. Far from her eyes, I want all that pleases you; but before her I can want nothing more than what is honest.

SULPITIUS.

Since a futile timidity carries the day, since neither my arguments nor your interest have been able to bring you to speak, all we can do is arrange between them a meeting that appears unplanned.

44. Rousseau devotes the second longest chapter of the *Social Contract* (Bk. 4, Chap. 4) to a discussion of the Comitia or popular assemblies, this in order to discover "how the freest and most powerful people on earth exercised its supreme power" (*Collected Writings*, IV, 203). The Roman republic was divided into three classes of Tribes, each of which was further subdivided into ten Curiae, and each of these into Decuriae. Moreover, a body of a hundred horsemen or knights was formed from each of the tribes and denoted as a Century. Popular assemblies of the Roman people gathered according to the vision into tribes, curiae, or centuries could be convoked; it is to such assemblies that Brutus refers here.

45. The antecedent is a feminine singular noun that is never clearly identified, but is most likely "virtue."

46. The following fragments (13–18) are to be found only in the edition of 1792.

47. The French term is *image sacrée* and could be rendered as "sacred image" or as "damned image"; "blessed image" seems to capture the ambiguity of the expression.

THE GALLANT MUSES

1. On this occasion see *Confessions,* in *Collected Writings,* V, 279–280.
2. Unlike other editions, Pléiade misnumbers this and the next scene.

THE FESTIVALS OF RAMIRE

1. Lines marked with an asterisk are those Rousseau preserved from Voltaire's original libretto to *The Princess of Navarre.*
2. In the original, Voltaire wrote:

Forever France
Let's receive our kings:
May the same valor
Triumph under the same laws.

THE VILLAGE SOOTHSAYER

1. Charles Pinot de Duclos (1704–1772) arranged for the performance of *The Village Soothsayer.* Later, with Duclos's permission, Rousseau dedicated the *Second Discourse* to Geneva. In spite of suggestions that he dedicate works to influential people, Rousseau never made another dedication.
2. In his *Dictionary of Music* Rousseau wrote an important article, "Unity of Melody," which elaborates on this principle. See *Collected Writings,* VII, 476–478.

D'ALEMBERT'S ARTICLE "GENEVA"

1. This article appeared in Volume 7 of the *Encyclopédie,* which was published in October 1757.
2. "After darkness light."
3. "About the little things the princes deliberate, about the big things everyone; yet even about the things which are in the power of the people to decide, the princes first consult" (Tacitus, *Germany,* 11).
4. "O fortunate and more than fortunate, if they only knew their own good."

LETTER TO D'ALEMBERT ON THE THEATER

1. "Heaven grant a better lot to the pious [or the good] and such madness to our enemies." Virgil, *Georgics,* III.513.
2. The French word which is translated throughout by *drama* is *comédie,* except where it means comedy in our narrow sense. *Comédie* originally meant any play with a happy ending, as opposed to tragedy; but very early it began to be applied to the whole of drama in French usage. The most common word for actor is *comédien.*

3. [Although the current editors have chosen to follow Bloom's practice in his later translation of *Emile* of translating *moeurs* as "morals," it was thought useful to reproduce the following note explaining the original selection of "morals [manners]." For more discussion of this word, see *Collected Writings,* II, 203–204 n. 7.]

This expression (morals [manners]) is chosen to translate the French *moeurs.* Although the Latin *mores,* which is also used in English, is a perfectly adequate equivalent, it is not a word in common use and has been deformed by a certain technical use in contemporary sociology. The word *moeurs* is central to Rousseau's analysis of the theater, and something of its sense must be maintained in translation in order for his teaching to have full weight. *Moeurs* are morals as they express themselves in the way of life or the customs of men and nations; they are akin to what we would call character. "Morals" in our usage tends to be too abstract, implying certain duties and rules which must be obeyed, while "manners" implies superficial politeness with little relation to the total meaning or value of a life. *Moeurs,* on the contrary, means habits as they are related to moral goodness or badness; a man's taste in food or where he goes to take his amusement indicate more adequately the state of his soul and the type of actions he is likely to take than any opinions or principles he holds; and the habits that appear in themselves to be of the most trivial or indifferent nature can play the most important role in the direction of the whole man. Hence, it is of the first importance to study the effect of any institution on the habits of men to understand its moral effect; from the legislator's point of view the *moeurs* are the source of a state's well-being and the decency or viciousness of its citizens. The moral and religious principles common in Paris and Geneva may well be similar, but the ways of life and the men who live them are utterly different, and, humanly speaking, this is what counts. As the least evil, *morals-manners* has been chosen to keep the reader aware of Rousseau's constant attention to the real practices of men in evaluating their moral worth; in spite of its inelegance as a translation, this expression serves to remind us both of the relation of habit to morality and the fact that morals express themselves in apparently commonplace ways. Sometimes *moeurs* appears to mean either the one or the other exclusively, but the relation is always there.

4. Diderot. Rousseau thus announces publicly his break with his old friend. [Aristarchus of Samothrace lived in the third and second centuries B.C. and was a famous critic and editor.]

5. "Though thou drawest a sword at thy friend, yet despair not; for there may be a returning. If thou hast opened thy mouth against thy friend, fear not; for there may be a reconciliation: except for upbraiding, or pride, or disclosing of secrets, or a treacherous wound: for these things every friend will depart."

6. [See pp. 246–248 above.]

7. Socinianism was a Christian sect closely allied with the development of Unitarianism. It took its name from its founder, Fausto Sozino, an Italian of the sixteenth century who lived in Poland for a long time, where his movement had great strength. It was popular throughout Europe and was accepted by many Protestant churches. Socinianism was anti-trinitarian and held that reason is the

sole and final authority in the interpretation of the scripture. It further denied eternal punishments. Calvin had condemned the doctrine, so that the imputation in d'Alembert's article was both a daring interpretation of the doctrine of Geneva's pastors and one which was likely to be dangerous for them.

8. The parenthetical statement first appeared in the corrections to the first edition and disappeared in the edition of 1782.

9. Rousseau means *Instruction Chrétien* (Geneva, 1752), by Jacob Vernet.

10. This declaration can be found in the appendices of both the Fontaine and Brunel editions.

11. David Hume. [An alternative suggestion is Guillaume-Thomas-François Raynal, a friend of both d'Alembert and Rousseau.]

12. The French word here translated by *theater* is *spectacle* and has a much broader and richer meaning than the word *theater* would imply. It is literally anything that one goes to see, and hence entertainment in general. Unfortunately, to translate *spectacle* in a more general way would render its specific sense of *theater* unintelligible in English. But the reader should keep the other connotations in mind, for Rousseau does not limit himself to a discussion of the theater narrowly conceived, but is investigating the moral effects and correctness of all the pleasures of the eyes and ears with particular reference to their most sophisticated form, the drama. For this purpose the French word is propitious in that its more specific meaning can always be broadened to include its generic sense, and hence the drama can be compared to other forms of entertainment. The very word *spectacle* recalls the general problem, while the word, *theater* does not. Most generally *spectacle* has been translated by *theater*, but where impossible, *entertainment* [or *spectacle*] has been used. *Spectacle* is the word used by Rousseau in the title of the work.

13. See note 9.

14. *Galanterie* is not an exact equivalent of gallantry as commonly used in English, where it today almost exclusively implies valor. The French implies attentiveness to ladies and can thus be a vice in Rousseau's view. The two usages have their common source in chivalry, when knights performed valorous deeds out of love for fair ladies. The French took the side of love and the English that of bravery in their development of the word. No satisfactory English equivalent can be found for the French, and, all in all, gallantry makes the best translation. The word *galant*, translated as gallant, presents the same difficulty.

15. "Each led by his pleasures" (Virgil *Eclogues* II.65).

16. A popular comedy in the eighteenth century representing a natural man, written by Delisle de la Drévetière. [It was first performed in 1721.]

17. Tacitus, *Annals* XVI.5; Suetonius, *Vespasian* 4.

18. *Nanine*, or *Le Préjugé Vaincu*, by Voltaire. [It was first performed in 1749 and is the story of the love between a nobleman and the daughter of a peasant.]

19. Plutarch *Sulla* XXX. [Versions of this sentence and the next one can also be found in the *Second Discourse*. They were not in the original edition of the *Discourse*, but were inserted for the 1782 edition. Interestingly, in the *Discourse* these events are cited to show the persistence of pity in corrupt civilized people; whereas here they are used to show the sterility of theatrically induced pity.]

20. Alexander (Plutarch *Pelopidas* 31).

21. Tacitus *Annals* XI.2. (This passage was added later and appeared in the edition of 1782). [The Pléiade edition has left out this passage, beginning with, "Tacitus reports" because there is no manuscript trace of it. See Pléiade, V, 1319.]

22. *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et la peinture* (Paris, 1719), Part I, Section 3.

23. By Thomas Corneille.

24. Beat. Louis de Muralt, *Lettres sur les Anglais et sur les Français* (Zurich, 1725), Letter V, p. 375.

25. "For comedy aims at imitating men worse, and tragedy men better than those of today" (*Poetics* 2).

26. *Catalina* and *Atrée* were written by Crebillon; *Mahomet* is by Voltaire.

27. Atreus.

28. Plutarch, *Sayings of Unknown Spartans* 55.

29. The French word translated here and elsewhere by *audience* is *parterre.* Its exact English equivalent is *pit,* the word denoting the part of the theater in which the poor paid low admission for the right to stand. It has, hence, a derogatory sense implying the tasteless mod, the *hoi polloi.*

30. "Censure is indulgent to crows, hard on pigeons" (Juvenal *Satires* II.63).

31. *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme.*

32. *Georges Dandin.*

33. *L'Avare.*

34. This sentence disappeared from the edition of 1782.

35. An imitation of a play by the same name of Calderón. [The French version was by Louis de Boissy. It was first performed in 1732.]

36. The audience liked the poem which Alceste ridiculed for Molière.

37. Immediately after the first edition, Rousseau substituted the following for the next lines: "It was they who first introduced those coarse ambiguities, no less proscribed by taste than decency, which were for a long time the amusement of evil-minded societies and the embarrassment of chaste person, and of which the better tone, slow in its progress, has not yet purified certain provinces. Other authors, less shocking in their witticisms, let the former amuse fallen women and undertook to encourage cheats. Regnard, one of the more modest, is not the least dangerous, It is unbelievable, etc." [The publisher made the correction in 1762.]

38. *Police* means that branch of government which has to do with public order and morality. Our narrower usage of the word is a strict result of a narrowed conception of the functions of government; for Rousseau, the word still maintains its broader significance.

39. This is a résumé of the last two acts of Regnard's *Le Légataire Universel.*

40. Constance is a character from Diderot's *le Fils naturel; Cénie* is a play by Mme. de Graffigny.

41. "Ignorant he of the treacherous breeze" (Horace *Odes* I.viii).

42. Virgil *Aeneid* V.654.

43. Plutarch *Sayings of the Spartans: Euboedas and Areus* 1.

44. *L'hystoire et plaisante Cronique du petit Jehan de Saintré* was a novel by Antoine de la Salle written in the fifteenth century. It was adapted for the theater, in the eighteenth century, by Gueullette.

45. "Unsightly is an old soldier: (Ovid *Amor.* I.ix.4). (The passage continues, *turpe senex amor:* "unsightly is an old lover.")

46. Plutarch *Cato the Censor* 17; *Advice to Bride and Groom* 13.

47. "Against his will, against hers" (Suetonius *Titus* vii.2). Rousseau adds, "against the spectator's will."

48. By Richardson. [This note was added to the edition of 1782.]

49. *The London Merchant, or the History of George Barnwell,* by George Lillo. [This note was added to the edition of 1782.]

50. See 265.

51. Rousseau here plays upon the word *spectacle;* a moral theater would be "something to see" and would be a theatrical entertainment in itself.

52. Plutarch *On the Delays of the Divine Vengeance* 4, *Lives of Ogis and Cleamenes,* XXX, 3.

53. This tribunal was established by Louis XIV for the purpose of ending the practice of dueling. It did not succeed; Rousseau here criticizes it and shows how it ought to have been constituted.

54. A famous square in Paris where executions usually took place.

55. Cf. Saint-Simon, *Mémoires,* XIX, 174 (Chervel edition).

56. "If we may compare small things with great" (Virgil *Georgics* IV.176).

57. The Consistory was composed of the pastors and twelve elders who exercised a general moral supervision over the city. The Chamber was appointed by the council for the purpose of guarding the sumptuary laws and also received the complaints of the consistory.

58. Anne Oldfield, 1683–1730, was the most famous English actress of her time.

59. Livy VII.2.

60. *De Oratore* I.61.

61. It is not in the *Pro Q. Roscio* that Cicero says this but in the *Pro Quintio,* ch. 25.

62. "Whoever appears on the stage, on the assertion of a praetor, is civilly dishonored." (Rousseau here quotes from memory, and the citation is not quite accurate although the sense is not altered. The actual quote is: *Infamia notatur . . . qui artis ludicrae pronuntiandive causa in scenam prodierit* [*Digesta* III.2]).

63. *Atellanae* and *Exodia* were comic farces.

64. Rousseau's assertion that there was no theater at Sparta is in error. M. Leroy of the Academy of Inscriptions wrote him to explain that there were the ruins of a theater at Sparta, and he responded thanking Leroy in a letter dated November 4, 1758. Leroy's letter is in the edition of Geneva, 1782, Volume XXIII, p. 426. [See 381–383 below.]

65. Note added later and included in the edition of 1782.

66. Cf. note 24.

67. *Clarissa Harlowe,* by Richardson.

68. The word translated by *chasteness* in the following passage is *pudeur,* which means decent shame or bashfulness in relation to erotic matters.

69. Voltaire, *Discours en vers sur l'homme* (sixth discourse).

70. Plutarch *Sulla* 35.

71. Herodotus III.12.

72. [By] Diderot. In the second *Entretien.*

73. A verse by Boileau from his *Satire X (sur les femmes).*

74. [See D'Alembert's article "Geneva," 241 above.]

75. [See D'Alembert's article "Geneva," 242–243 above.]

76. This last sentence was added later by Rousseau and appears in the edition of 1782.

77. Herodotus III.12.

78. The text in Livy has not been found.

79. The books go directly from the ladies who devour them to shopkeepers who use them to wrap their wares.

80. This last line was added later and appeared in the edition of 1782.

81. "Imposters": a play on the word: (1) cheats and frauds; (2) those who think up and impose taxes, perhaps tax-farmers. [Bodin, *The Six Books of the Republic,* Book VI, Ch. II. Rousseau makes the same remark in "Political Economy" (*Collected Writings,* III, 170), where we have translated the same term as "imposers."]

82. "Then, it seems, if a man who is able by wisdom to take on all sorts of forms and to imitate all things should come to the city and wish to make a display of himself and his poems, we would get down on our knees in worship before him as one who is holy, wondrous, and sweet; but we would say that it is not lawful for such a man to arise in our city, and we would send him away pouring myrrh over his head and crowning him with wool; and we ourselves would make use of the more austere and less sweet poet and storyteller for our benefit, the one who would imitate the diction of the decent man and would speak the things which are said according to the patterns that we set down as law when we undertook to educate the soldiers." (Plato *Republic* 398a–b.)

83. "What harm does death do me? Virtue has strengthened by misfortune; It is destroyed by neither cross nor sword of a cruel tyrant."

84. The Escalade was an independence holiday at Geneva. [See "D'Alembert's article 'Geneva,' 241 above.]

85. Daniel 5:5.

86. Comedy by Saint-Foix.

87. "[Consecrate] life to truth" (Juvenal *Satires* IV.91). The context of this citation should be examined.

88. Plutarch *Sayings of the Spartans, Lycurgus* 12–14.

89. "Alas, hardly will the vine leaf defend the ripe grapes" (Virgil *Georgics* I.448).

90. Plutarch *Spartan Institutions* 15.

91. See D'Alembert's article "Geneva," 249 above.

"LETTER TO J.J. ROUSSEAU BY D'ALEMBERT"

1. This fable concerns a Scythian philosopher who travels to Greece and observes the practice of pruning. Returning to Scythia he prunes healthy and unhealthy plants indiscriminately, leaving a desert behind him. In the fifth paragraph below, d'Alembert elaborates on this view of Rousseau's thought.

2. D'Alembert is referring to Rousseau's *Discourse on the Sciences and the Arts.*

3. D'Alembert is referring to Rousseau's *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality.*

4. D'Alembert is referring to the end of Rousseau's *Letter on French Music.* See *Collected Writings,* VII, 174.

5. See 275 above.

6. See 262 above.

7. Astraea, sometimes identified with Justice, lived among humans during the Golden Age. See Ovid, *Metamorphoses,* I, 150. Rousseau's critics sometimes referred to the state of nature as described in the *Second Discourse* as the age of Astraea. See *Collected Writings,* II, 151.

8. Rousseau had cited the same remark from Plutarch's *Life of Solon;* see 299 above.

9. Racine, "Lettres à l'auteur des *Hérésies imaginaires* et des deux *Visionaires,* *Oeuvres complètes,* II (Paris: Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1966), 28–29.

10. Diogenes the Cynic lived in the fourth century B.C. It was not unusual for critics to compare Rousseau with Diogenes, suggesting that both pretended to be indifferent to the opinion of others only to attract attention to themselves.

11. See 262 above.

12. See 265 above.

13. These are all plays by Voltaire.

14. See 267 above.

15. See 268 above.

16. These plays are discussed by Rousseau; see 271–274 above.

17. César Vichard, abbé de Saint-Réal (1639–1692).

18. Antoine Arnauld (1612–1694).

19. Both plays are by Voltaire.

20. See 285 above.

21. By Voltaire.

22. "And his hand against all" from Genesis 16:12. This is said about Ishmael.

23. See 310 above. As Rousseau's note indicates, he retracted this charge after being criticized for it.

24. On Esopus, see 307 above.

25. See 285 above.

26. See 327 above.

27. At the time d'Alembert wrote this, Rousseau was, in fact, finishing *Julie, or the New Héloise.*

28. Descartes's student was Queen Christina of Sweden.

29. See 325 above.

30. See 279 above.

31. See 336 above.

32. See 258 above.

33. See 258 above.

"RESPONSE TO THE ANONYMOUS LETTER"

1. Rousseau's response contains the substance of the letter originally written to him. Some time later on his copy of this letter, Rousseau wrote, "This piece is very good; it must be used."

2. In the first draft of this passage Rousseau refers to a visit he received from these men; therefore he was not entirely unacquainted with them when he wrote his response to their letter.

3. See 300–305 above.

4. Jean Bodin (1529/30–1596); Antoine Loisel (1536–1617); François de Salignac de la Mothe Fénelon (1651–1715); Henri Boulainvilliers (1658–1722); Charles Irénée Castel, abbé de Saint-Pierre (1658–1743); Charles Louis Secondat, baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu (1689–1755); Victor de Riqueti, marquis de Mirabeau (1715–1789; Gabriel Bonnot, abbé de Mably (1709–1785) were all French and wrote extensively on legislation.

5. The term *politique* has a range of meanings from politician to statesman and political adviser to political theorist.

6. As Rousseau's note indicates, he does not understand sovereignty to lie in the king (or government). Rather, he insists that sovereignty lies in the people and that a king is merely their deputy.

LETTER FROM LEROY

1. Julien-David Leroy (1724–1803) was a member of the Academy of Inscriptions.

2. See 309 above.

3. The book is *Ruines des plus beaux monuments de la Grèce* (1758).

LETTER FROM ROUSSEAU TO LEROY

1. Rousseau did not include Leroy's letter in any of the editions published during his lifetime, but it is in the earliest posthumous editions.

2. Nicolas Craig (1550?-1602) wrote a history of Sparta.

3. Pseudonymn for Georges Guillet de Saint-George (1625?–1705).

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Charles E. Butterworth is Professor of Government and Politics at the University of Maryland College Park and is the translator of *The Reveries of the Solitary Walker* for this series.

Christopher Kelly is Professor of Political Science at Boston College, translator of several other volumes in this series, and author of *Rousseau's Exemplary Life* (1987) and *Rousseau as Author* (2003).

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